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*UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA*

# *GLASGOW'S NEW WOMAN IN ART:*
# *"STUDIOTIC" DAUGHTERS FROM THE MACDONALD SCHOOL OF SPOOK*

*by*

Sandra Lucretia Gunderson

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND

RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

*in*

ART HISTORY

Department of Art and Design

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1990

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## EPOCH IV – *"THE NEW WOMAN"*

(Positively Her First and *Only* Appearance in Glasgow)

*New Woman, "gentle creature," is stern of mind and feature,*
*She's making ducks and drakes of man's most cherished whims,*
*She wears his hats and coats! she wants to share his votes!!*
*She wants an equal world composed of "hers" and "hims"!*

Verse from the Masque *"The R(Evolution) of Woman"*
written by Francis Newbery and performed by GSA students
Bellefield Sanatorium, Lanark, c. 1900.

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***GLASGOW'S NEW WOMAN IN ART:***

***"Studiotic" Daughters from the Macdonald School of Spook***

*Submitted by*

Sandra Lucretia Gunderson

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

*in*

ART HISTORY

Bridget Elliott

Ronald Davey

Jo-Ann Wallace

Jorge Frascara

Date: 14 May '90

## *DEDICATION*

***To Mark***

Who is always there

*and*

***To Margaret and Frances***

Who should be here now.

## ABSTRACT

In the last decade of the nineteenth century two sisters, Margaret and Frances Macdonald, produced a series of watercolors and graphic designs which incorporated the female nude. Their decorative style was supposedly without precedent: a blatant rejection of both academic and Arts & Crafts conventions in favor of unorthodox, symbolic images. These provocative works were produced during the sisters' enrollment at the Glasgow School of Art in the period 1890–94. The Glasgow public described their designs as hideous, "ghoul–like" offences, and London critics subsequently attached the label "School of Spook" to the Macdonald sisters and their husbands Mackintosh and MacNair.

Women artists who created not only nude but distorted female figures were extremely rare and invariably controversial. By limiting their access to the nude model, the Academy attempted to channel women artists into the lower ranks of landscape, still–life, portrait and genre artists. The Glasgow School of Art was very much an exception in terms of these usual gender–biased teaching practices. The philosophies of its Headmaster, Francis Newbery, were critically important to the Macdonald sisters' development in particular, and fostered an independence on the part of the school's students in general. This independent spirit was instrumental in initiating a unique, student–run periodical known as the *Magazine*, where most of the Macdonald sisters' early work was reproduced. It also manifested itself in their rebellion against Academic conventions and in radical imagery. The catalysts for this rebellion are to be found in the ideologies of two very different types of art

periodicals: (1) Mainstream journals such as the *Magazine of Art* and *Art Journal*, which functioned as organs of the Academy, and (2) the new, more polemical journals such as the *Studio* and *Yellow Book* which challenged these notions by focusing on such issues as younger artists, design, and international art.

Research to date has primarily addressed the Macdonald sisters as secondary to the architects Mackintosh and MacNair. The significance of the periodical press in general and the relevance of the *Magazine* in particular, for the assessment of their early work has been overlooked. This thesis examines the graphic work of the Macdonald sisters produced during the years 1890–94 and the conflicting ideologies conveyed by the press which gave rise to the evolution of Glasgow's "New Woman" in art.

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## INTRODUCTION

During the first half of the 1890's two art students from the Glasgow School of Art produced a series of watercolours and graphic designs which incorporated the female nude. Their decorative style was supposedly without precedent, a blatant rejection of the formal vocabularies and subject parameters of the prevailing Arts & Crafts Movement. The unorthodox, symbolic images they produced were perceived by some art writers as "[. . .] part of some strange system of magic or ritual. . .crowned by faces of weird import."[1] Critics in London opposed to or unprepared for their stylistic innovations determined that "the School of Spook" was a fitting label for a group whose designs were pervaded by "ghostly long drawn figures with pained faces and sadness passing words."[2]

These comments applied to the work of Margaret Macdonald (1865–1933) and Frances Macdonald (1874–1921) in collaboration with their respective husbands, Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928) and Herbert MacNair (1868–1953). This group, later known as "The Glasgow Four", produced a decorative style which was adopted by a number of their colleagues at the Glasgow School of Art and subsequently termed "the Glasgow Style."

Mandates of the prevailing Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic Movements called for a considerably more conservative approach to design with firmly established formal vocabularies and subject parameters. In contrast, the unorthodox designs produced by Margaret and Frances Macdonald evolved from

their individual personalities and talents as well as a specific set of attitudes, eclectic sources and circumstances. The end result was not an insular movement but one of considerable influence. As Hermann Muthesius wrote in 1902:

> Whatever one's individual attitude to the Glasgow style may be, one thing cannot be denied: it has brought new values into the turmoil of the artistic manifestations of our time. It is independent to a high degree and bears the stamp of breeding and character. More than that it has a contagious effect. The stimulus it has given is felt not only in Glasgow, it has penetrated deep into the Continent and certainly as far as Vienna where it found fertile soul.[3]

In its embryonic stages, the style of the Glasgow Four was attributable at least equally to the Macdonald sisters; however their contribution has subsequently been overshadowed by their husbands who later achieved considerable professional status as architects and interior designers. In retrospect their work may be seen as the embryonic stages of a shift towards Art Nouveau and the Modern Movement. Much of the research to date has focused on this aspect, particularly emphasizing the architectural achievements of Mackintosh and MacNair. Nevertheless, in spite of this subsequent history, it is interesting to note that in the 1890's the *Studio*, an influential art periodical, referred to this new style as "the Macdonald School."[4]

In fact the highly conventionalized (a term widely used and understood in the 19th Century and a near equivalent to "stylized") or "ghoul-like" female figure which informed the School of Spook had its origins at the Glasgow School of Art, where it was developed by the Macdonald sisters prior to formation of the Glasgow Four in 1895–96.[5] The Macdonald sisters also contributed to more than forty exhibitions throughout Europe and in America

between 1895 and 1924.[6] Leading contemporary periodicals which featured their work included the *Studio*, the *Yellow Book*, *Dekorative Kunst*, *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, and *Ver Sacrum*.

Over 150 of their works, including watercolors, graphics, metalwork, textiles and decorative panels have been documented with slightly over half of this number surviving. Forty of these are by Margaret and twenty by Frances, as attested by their signatures. The remainder have been attributed either jointly to the sisters, or allegedly to either sister on stylistic grounds.[7]

During the early 1890's the sisters worked primarily in watercolour, gouache or pen and pencil; in some cases only these drawings, as preliminary designs for decorative objects, survive. Although the preferred medium of both sisters was beaten metal or gesso wall panels, the origins of the distorted, stylized female figures are to be found in the graphic designs and drawings from the period of their enrollment at the Glasgow School of Art in 1890–94. Work of this nature, which is the subject of this thesis, is drawn from a variety of religious and literary themes. Ultimately Margaret was influenced by the writings of contemporary Belgian symbolist author and playwright Maurice Maeterlinck, and by Shakespearean and fairytale subjects. Frances, however, continued to develop symbolic and allegorical imagery in collaboration with her husband, MacNair. Neither sister worked directly from nature. No sketchbooks exist, nor are there any known portraits, landscapes or still lifes.[8]

As noted above, the "Macdonald School" was a term destined to be omitted in subsequent analyses of the Glasgow Four and its members. It has been pointed out that "Mackintosh's dynamic personality so dominated the scene in later years that his friends and admirers almost invariably contend

that he, and he alone, was responsible for all original work emanating from Glasgow in the 1890's."[9] This opinion was shared by the critic, P. Morton Shand, who pointedly omitted any reference to either sister in his article "Scenario for a Human Drama: The Glasgow Interlude" published in the *Architectural Review* of 1935.[10] Margaret, he believed, could not in any sense be considered her husband's equal or his "alter ego" since

> "Outside of circles of loyal friends in Glasgow and Chelsea her work is either unknown, or long since forgotten; and the future is scarcely likely to see her rather thin talent restored to a place of honour."[11]

Despite several exceptions, the negative criticisms of more recent writers appear to have outweighed even the influential voice of the *Studio*. Earlier, more supportive journalists and even Mackintosh himself, who declared that "Margaret has genius; I have only talent"[12] merit considerably more attention than that which has previously been granted.

With the exception of a single exhibition of Margaret's work undertaken by the Hunterian Art Gallery of the University of Glasgow (1983–84), little has been published to date which specifically addresses the work of the Macdonald sisters.[13] Although often asserted, most of the allegations about the Macdonald sisters' formal associations with historical ornament or their contemporaries have not been conclusively developed. In fact, the existing accounts can be seen as problematic since they invariably discuss the Macdonald sisters in a more generalized group context.[14]

Both primary and secondary reviewers have acknowledged that the *Studio*, the *Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal* and the *Yellow Book* were amongst the new periodicals which had significant impact upon the work of the Glasgow Four. However, few if any sources have (1) undertaken detailed and

historical research on the Macdonald sisters' early designs, particularly in terms of a thorough, formal analysis; (2) addressed the allegations of stylistic precedents, which include Egyptian art, Celtic ornament, the symbolism of Beardsley and Toorop, and the Pre-Raphaelites; and (3) explored the ways in which both mainstream periodicals and newer periodicals affected the production and reception of the Macdonald sisters' work. These are the issues which will be pursued in this thesis.

## CHAPTER 1

## GHOULS, GRIEVANCES AND GLASWEGIANS

*Would you witness a conception*
*Of the woman really New*
*Without the least deception*
*From the artist's point of view*
*See the Art School Exhibition*
*In the rue de Sauchiehall*
*They don't charge you for admission*
*(For they haven't got the gall)*

*As painted by her sister*
*Who affects the realm of Art*
*The Woman New's a twister*
*To give a nervous man a start*
*She is calculated chiefly*
*To make him really think*
*That he's got 'em and that, briefly,*
*It's the dire result of drink*

*For if Caliban was mated*
*With a femine gorilla*
*Who her youth had dissipated*
*O'er the book yclept the Yellow*
*The daughters of the wedding*
*Would be something such as these--*
*Sadly scant of fleshly padding*
*And ground-spavined at the knees.*

*But the dodge is very easy*
*If of conscience you're devoid*
*Take a supper--if it please you--*
*Of roast pork and liver fried*
*From the nightmares that will follow*
*Paint impressions in pale green*
*Of the hags who sought your pillow*
*Spectral, hideous and lean.*

*Let them waltz across your paper*
*In a weird Macabre dance*
*Or perform some fiendish caper*
*With the Beardsley leering glance*
*Let their slim limbs sprawl erratic*
*And eschew all kinds of dress*
*If the whole thing's idiotic*
*Then your picture's a success!*

*If you're asked for explanations*
*Talk vaguely of design*
*Or adopt a few evasions*
*About temperament and line*
*But if nothing save confession*
*Of your real intent will do*
*Say the hags are your impression*
*Of the Women who are "New."*

From "The New Woman in Art",
*Glasgow Evening News*, November 13, 1894

Proudly displayed on the walls of the Glasgow School of Art, the New Woman greeted spectators who attended the school's Art Club Exhibition in November of 1894. There was no doubt that she had an impact — even if she more closely resembled a two-headed serpentine dancer.[1] In the subsequent barrage of protests mounted by various local newspapers, citizens of Glasgow conveyed their horror in graphic terms: One critic shuddered that the New Woman resembled "Human beings drawn on the gas-pipe system — arms, legs, and bodies all of the same skinny patterns, with large lips and immense hands," and asserted that she was obviously the work of a frenzied medical student, judging from the ghoulish objects floating about in a sea of green mud and anatomical parts.[2]

The furor was caused by artists, not diabolical medical practitioners: specifically, Francis Newbery's students from the Glasgow School of Art (GSA). Logically, the Glasgow public might have anticipated that an

Exhibition of work from the School's Art Club would have reflected the achievements and status of the Glasgow School of Art which had achieved a second place in the United Kingdom at the National Competitions. However, when confronted with the weird symbolism of some works, the Glasgow public could only conclude that the students surely suffered from "delirium tremens."[3] Even the judges of that exhibition exclaimed that some of the more extraordinary works surely led to the graveyard. Alleging his fellow judges to have become ill from nightmares when exposed to these images, one judge demanded that in future this "ghoul-like sort of thing" be suppressed.[4] *Quiz* even refused to satirize these images, reflecting instead on what it termed the "good" work — flower studies and etchings devoid of the dreaded stippling and scraping. These, it declared, had evidences of honest endeavour with no lack of originality.[5] As for the "ghoul-like" designs of the Misses Macdonald, *Quiz* pronounced these as

> "simply hideous, and the less said about them the better. Distinctly the authorities should not halt till such offences are brought within the scope of the Further Powers."[6]

Margaret and Frances Macdonald, though presumably well versed in design and theory, were the chief perpetrators of these artistic blasphemies. One newspaper account from the 1890's described them as thoroughly earnest students with "vivid imagination and (art apart) remarkably clever girls who could presumably explain their theories, though not to anyone's understanding."[7] Originality was one thing, the critics cried, but why two young ladies with nothing of gloom in their own atmosphere should spend their time designing ghastly images was beyond comprehension.[8] "Originality", it would appear, should not extend to figural variations or deviations from

aesthetic standards of the period, particularly if the artist was female. The social and academic conventions of that era relegated women artists to an inferior status which, in determining their role as still-life, genre or portrait artists or alternatively, arts and craftswomen (which held an even lower level of esteem) implicitly barred them from pursuing the nude figure without major compromise.

The greatest outrage of judges and spectators alike was directed to the distortions and the accompanying connotations of starvation and death in the Macdonald sisters' figural works. As one self-proclaimed "outsider — not a life class student but (one) with common sense" pointed out,

> ". . painting figures with no clothes on has always excited opposition from a large portion of the public, but these ambitious enthusiasts in their search after truth paint their figures without even their flesh on. The only consolation I can see is they can't go much further."[9]

Aside from exaggerated anatomical parts, emaciation and macabre associations with death (graveyards), the public also took offence to the colours employed by the Macdonald sisters, specifically the biting, acidic green which characterizes much of their early work:

> "How a person with any pretensions to sanity can look at the caricature of a dissipated lay-model with anything but amused pity is more than I can understand. . .'All flesh is grass', we are told, but that is surely no reason why their figures should be coloured such a baleful green. . .I hope that some at least of the students will take Mr. Roche's advice to heart and rise from the pea-soup bath in which they at present seem to be submerged."[10]

It is significant that these objectionable images — not only unclothed but "unfleshed" and distorted — had been conceived of and executed by two female students of the Glasgow School of Art. The institution had by then achieved its reputation as a progressive art school openly receptive to women,

encouraging individualism and demanding originality. Yet none of the other male or female students produced the hauntingly Symbolist images which earned the Macdonald sisters and their future husbands Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Herbert MacNair the label "School of Spook."[11]

The mandates of the prevailing Aesthetic and Arts & Crafts Movements, along with figureheads such as William Morris, Walter Crane and Christopher Dresser, provided guidance and stylistic precedents which most of the other male and female students of the GSA adopted. Although many women at the School also focused on the female figure, they rarely presented nude images and, in any event, avoided figural distortion. Apart from some instances of stylization in decorative symbols, most of their work remained safely within the prescribed conventions of medieval manuscript illumination, fairy tales, Shakespearian drama and representations of nature.

Glasgow's "New Woman in Art" evolved from the liberated artistic milieu of the Glasgow School which owed a great deal to the energies of its Headmaster, Francis Newbery. This "New Woman" was the creation of an updated and exceptional kind of artist: the woman who could freely explore, exploit and manipulate the female form without restriction. Far removed from the voluptuous Academy nude and devoid of the usual classical and allegorical accoutrements, this "New Woman" clearly challenged her audience on two fronts: first, in a formal sense she was unprecedented in Britain, rising amidst a conservative Scottish tradition of brown-toned landscape and genre paintings (which induced several writers in the periodicals to attach the label "gluepot painters" to the Scottish artists who preceded the Macdonald sisters). Second, her physical state engendered uncomfortable associations with decadence: more

particularly, the *femme fatale* of Beardsley and other Symbolist artists. One critic also pointed out that this "New Woman" was one and the same as her sister — the artist who had created her. As such, the New Woman's deviations from the heavily inscribed norms and expectations of a healthy femininity were a parallel to the unladylike, subversive behavior of the Macdonald sisters in producing her. By encroaching upon Academic conventions which proclaimed portrayals of the nude to be the jurisdiction of male artists, the Macdonald sisters were analogous to the political and social insurgents often referred to as "Wild" or "New Women."

Women artists who created not only nude but distorted female figures were a phenomenon: access to the nude model was a control by which the academy attempted to force women artists into a lower status of landscape, still-life, portrait or genre artist. This type of gender bias was prevalent in both enrollment and teaching practices of most art institutions, but the Glasgow School of Art was an exception. When the Glasgow public indignantly expressed its disapproval of the controversial designs by the Macdonald sisters at the GSA Exhibition, the press reported that its Headmaster Francis Newbery ". . .is a preceptor who will not be fossilised — which accounts for the Art Posters' failure to petrify him."[12]

There were other important but opposing forces which played a significant role in the New Woman's evolution. On the one hand, the official male-dominated Art Academy assumed a monopolistic role in defining these codes of expectation for both the public and the art community. Its conservative and virtually hegemonic mandates were expressed through pedantic, mainstream art periodicals such as the *Magazine of Art* and *Art*

*Journal* which reflected a strong gender bias. On the other hand, the advent of new publications in the last decades of the 19th Century countered these conventional currents, opening new avenues of enquiry and providing a powerful motivation for young artists. Since the art periodical was an integral teaching component of any art school, it was a powerful means of conveying both visual styles and ideologies. The flood of art journals was generally a reflection of an increased interest in matters of art and taste; consequently art critics gradually assumed something of the charisma and popularity of theologians.[13] The public was also offered substantial reviews of current art exhibitions through national daily newspapers, which shaped their expectations and opinions.

One final source, previously overlooked to date, also leads one to question the dominance of Mackintosh in formation of the Spook School style. This is the *Magazine*, a unique and short–lived publication created by the elite of the Glasgow School of Art (Frances and Margaret amongst them). This journal offers the clearest evidence of students' attitudes and preferred themes, since it is the direct and personal expression of primarily women artists. The majority of the Macdonald sisters' early work was designed for or contained within that publication. Thus, while the *Magazine* affirms the importance of the art periodical it also provides an opportunity to assess the unrestrained "New Woman" from the Macdonald School of Spook.

## CHAPTER 2

## NEWBERY, NEW ATTITUDES AND NEW WOMEN AT THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

During the 1880's the Macdonald family left Newcastle–Under–Lyme where Margaret, Frances and their two brothers Charles and Archibald had spent their youth, and travelled to Scotland. They eventually settled in Dungas Castle, Bowling, in 1889. As a result of this move, the Macdonald sisters were able to attend one of the most successful art schools in the country: the Glasgow School of Art.[1] Their attendance at this institution during the years 1890–1894 had a critical impact on the development of their style, largely due to the teaching philosophies of its Headmaster, Francis H. Newbery. For Margaret, the association with Newbery developed into a forty year friendship.[2]

Newbery was an academic painter in his own right, but he also fostered a strong belief in the primary importance of design and the decorative arts. On his appointment as Headmaster of the GSA in 1885, Newbery ratified the directives of the school, voicing an allegiance towards design and the aesthetics of his adopted city:

> "The aim would be to make the education of such a character as to practically supply that which Glasgow at present needs — namely a race of designers of her own creation, capable of supplying the

> manufacturers of Glasgow with workable design, suitable for any manufacture on which the influence of art can be brought to bear.[3]

The most significant of Newbery's philosophies — many of which were published in local newspapers — called for creative independence. Under his direction the Macdonald sisters and their contemporaries were assured an uninhibited artistic climate from which the sisters' startlingly unprecedented images arose. Collectively, work produced by GSA students was perceived as unique. Subsequent to the 1895 Liege Exhibition *L'Oeuvre Artistique* which included 110 exhibits from Newbery's students (the Macdonald sisters amongst them), its organizer George Serrurier wrote of Newbery:–

> "Our Schools of Art are far, very far indeed from being so advanced as yours, and what has above all astonished us in your work is the great liberty left to the pupils to follow their own individuality.[4]

Probably the most significant result of Newbery's demands for original design in Glasgow was the evolution of "The Glasgow Style". Emerging under his enlightened leadership in the mid–1890's it differed from the work of the Glasgow School of Painters in that it was a distinctive decorative arts style created equally by male and female students who borrowed nothing from the previous generation of Scottish artists.[5] Through experimentation and contact with the work of their contemporaries in England and on the Continent, the group achieved what might be termed an idiosyncratic variation of Art Nouveau peculiar to Glasgow.[6] As the *Studio* declared,

> "Nowhere has the modern movement of art been entered upon more seriously than at Glasgow: the church, the school, the house, the restaurant, the shop, the poster, the book, with its printing, illustrating, and binding have all come under the spell of the new influence.[7]

At its core was a group known as "The Four": The Macdonald sisters, Mackintosh, and MacNair.[8] The earliest available work of the Macdonald sisters hints at the stylistic vocabulary which characterized the movement: stylized, organically inspired motifs of roses, foliage, and willowy human forms, employing sinuous curves juxtaposed with taut lines.[9] The relative visibility of its female members was a significant departure not only from the celebrity status of the contemporary "Glasgow Boys" and other local male artists, but also the prevailing male-dominated staff and students of British art schools.

Though Newbery clearly — and equally — encouraged female students, the exposure and support of women artists at the GSA owed as much to his predecessor Robert Greenlees. During his term as Headmaster of the Haldane Academy (as the Glasgow School of Art was then known) Greenlees played an instrumental role in the formation of the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists, a group which grew in status and number from its inception in 1882 until its demise in 1971. All of its eight founding members — women painters, teachers and art workers — were former students who sought an alternative to the weekly market (a bazaar at which essentially amateur artists and crafts people sold their wares) as the sole outlet at which they could display and sell their work.

The task was particularly difficult in Scotland, where women artists were virtually non-existent prior to the end of the 19th Century.[10] Rarely did circumstances permit Scottish women the required time for concentrated study and development of their talent. Inevitably economics prevailed, for in that poverty-stricken country visual arts could be produced only for a wealthy minority whose limited patronage excluded professional women artists.[11]

While the Trustees' Academy of Edinburgh had admitted both sexes since its inception in 1760, its emphasis lay in improving the standard of design of "manufactures" rather than as a training ground for painters. In 1840 Life Classes were introduced, and these continued during the transition to School of Art under the Department of Science and Art of South Kensington in 1858.[12] These were segregated classes, as were the entrances to the institution: male students entered from the front street, and women from the rear of the premises.[13] Such institutions, in any event, seldom encouraged their female students to actually consider the profession of artist as a career. In particular, the Edinburgh Art Academy held opposing views to those of the GSA. Sir Watson in speaking to the GSA Annual Meeting of 1885 said:–

> "I utterly discard the extraordinary views by Sir Fettes Douglas in his address, on a late occasion, to the students of the Edinburgh School of Art, as to work and capacities of women. Sir William declares she has no talent for drawing: speaks of her relative failure in art, and asks 'why is women's work like man's work only weaker and poorer?' Among her characteristics used to be beauty, grace, purity, smartness, and fine vividness of mind and quick perception. Most of these qualities are required, and can be expressed in art. Yet where are they to be found in her work? I answer, you will find them in the Glasgow School of Art. I believe that in the fine arts women, if they apply themselves, will take a distinguished place. . .and I trust, by many of our Lady Students, that they act for much higher motives than those attributed to them by that gentleman."[14]

The most viable alternatives for women were the Government Schools of Design which had been created to foster the local manufacturing industries by promoting good design.[15] Accordingly, their major thrust was never towards academic painting or "high art". In principle, the GSA was one of numerous such institutions throughout Britain.[16] Its female contingent comprised the majority of day–student enrollment at a higher tuition fee, while workers from

the artisan class (male or female) attended early morning or evening sessions.[17] This structure was particularly beneficial to the community of Glasgow, for it not only reduced the costs of foreign production but elevated an aesthetic consciousness of the design trade. As GSA President Sir James Watson declared,

> "From the exigencies of circumstances we have now in our schools of art, what we look for in vain in the schools of our Continental neighbours — namely the producer and the purchaser being educated side by side."[18]

Watson's comment indicates that the GSA student (many of whom were women) qualified as both professional designer and arbiter of taste. Without question women of that era were expected to fulfill the latter role.[19]

Their potential as professional designers, however, was debatable. For instance, John Ruskin, a primary force for reform in the industrial revolution and one who had immense influence on the Arts & Crafts Movement, believed that "the women's intellect is not for invention or creation but sweet ordering, arrangement and decision. Her great function is praise."[20] Another source acknowledged that the creative abilities of female students at the Royal Academy were directly proportional to their appearance and their youthfulness:

> "It is very pleasant work teaching girls, especially pretty ones, who somehow always seemed to me to make the best students. . .as a general rule, the prettier the girl the better the study. . .When female students first found their way into the Academy Schools there were amongst them some who were well advanced in years — veterans, so to speak; they did their best and were most painstaking and diligent, but somehow or other they were not successes. For what particular reason I do not remember. . .an age limit was fixed for the admission of all students, and very shortly after this the elderly female student disappeared from the Academy Schools. It was rather cruel, but I believe the Institution benefitted by it."[21]

The same writer confessed that girls worked "very hard and well: numbers of them have taken medals over the heads of boys. . ." but in lacking the self–reliant conceit which so often characterized the brightest geniuses of the male sex these female students, as potential artists, were doomed to failure.[22]

The limitations imposed on most women artists of this era who wished to be regarded as serious professionals — designers, craftspersons, academic painters or otherwise — have been well documented.[23] Often these restrictions were placed by the institution itself (in restricting or prohibiting female students), by prescribed social mandates (which refused to acknowledge women as serious students or professionals) or sheer economics (working for money entailed loss of caste).[24] Such established attitudes were efficiently conveyed to the students of arts institutions. For example, the *Magazine of Art*, a periodical which essentially reflected the views of the Academy, addressed itself to the issue in various editorials. In "Woman, and Her Chance as an Artist", it decreed that

> . . .in the probationary drawings of patient imitativeness — simple and touching devotion to stipple and shadow rather than true artistic power and breadth of any kind, woman may always be depended on to assert her power of execution; but it is in invention and originality, or the realization of them, that the failure of the sex in art becomes apparent. Hence it is that the artists of first–class ability produced by the country are furnished by the small minority of male passed candidates; the women usually relapse into obscurity, after achieving a partial success — they win the minor scholarships and then lose themselves into the Nirvana of artistic mediocrity.[25]

The editorial also stated that no female artist was worthy to be placed on a level even with masters of the second rank, excepting perhaps Rosa Bonheur, who was characterized "as masculine in her somewhat narrow range of execution and conception as she is in face and method of dress".[26]

Neither Newbery nor his predecessor Greenlees held similar views, despite their alliance with the Arts & Crafts Movement, the philosophies of its mentors and their respect for the Royal Academies.[27] Greenlees' efforts, it has been noted, aided the formation of The Glasgow Society of Lady Artists (1882) of which his own daughter Georgina Greenlees was a founding member and officer. This was the first women's society of its kind in Scotland and its rapidly increasing membership encompassed virtually every serious female artist in Glasgow, most of whom were graduates of the GSA.[28] Margaret Macdonald, though not an official member, exhibited with the group.[29] Two of her watercolors, "Les Giroflees" and "The Rose Garden" were destroyed by fire while being exhibited in May of 1901.

The Society seriously undertook the study of art through life classes, monthly meetings at which sketches were exhibited, and annual exhibition of Members' work. Failure to bring work to meetings resulted in fines; and expulsion was threatened should no work be exhibited within one session.[30] The quality of members' work was reflected in highly successful exhibitions, which enabled the Club to raise sufficient funds to purchase its own premises in 1895. The Society fostered great camaraderie, enthusiasm and novelty, for members were considered "rather daring and fast".[31] The women's movement in Scotland was then in its early stages (women over twenty had been granted municipal, and were pressing for parliamentary, vote); thus the Society represented a vehicle through which a form of independence might be manifested.[32]

Membership in women's suffrage societies in Scotland as elsewhere also reflected a predominance of women in the arts. By 1893 the Glasgow Society

of Lady Artists had secured leasehold premises at 5 Blyswood Square; and this location became a primary meeting place for suffragettes.[33] Many of the Macdonald sisters' fellow students, taking full advantage of their artistic and evidently political freedom, stitched suffrage banners between class sessions.[34] Ann Macbeth, head of the Embroidery Department at the school, assumed a key role as suffrage banner–maker and Jessie Newbery, also an instructor at the School and wife of its Headmaster, was an active member of the Women's Social and Political Union.[35]

Clearly the liberated atmosphere of the GSA was an appropriate one in which its students could pursue both artistic and political challenges. The relative number of its female students and staff, coupled with Newbery's encouragement thereof, was a significant factor in creating this ambience. During his tenure the proportion of female students increased steadily from 28% (1881–82) to 36% in the first school term in which the Macdonald sisters were enrolled (1890–91). In their last term (1893–94), 206 female, compared to 332 male students, comprised 38% of the student body.[36]

An increase in female enrollment was not unique to the GSA. The *Magazine of Art*, in its 1889 issue, cited the "extraordinary preponderance of women over men" in the number of successful candidates for admission to the Royal Academy schools:–

> Last year ten of the twelve new probationers were women; this year, ten out of sixteen belong to the artistically, 'weaker sex'. . .If the ladies could justify their success at the preliminary examination by later distinction, not only in their student period but also in after–life, the present standard might well be retained. . .This is a subject that should engage the prior attention of the sitting Reform Committee in Burlington House.[37]

Many of the female instructors at the GSA, including Frances Macdonald and Newbery's wife Jessie, were graduates of the school and assigned teaching roles in the applied or decorative arts.[38] The majority of these women were conforming to an extremely ancient tradition in Scottish education: that of teaching needlework to girls.[39] Girls received special training in the decorative tradition as early as the secondary level of their education. Domestic science and homecraft were added to the standard subjects of arithmetic, English, history and language. The emphasis undoubtedly stemmed from their teachers' training, which required daytime studies of academic subjects and evenings for perfecting needlework.[40] Women therefore dominated the teaching of embroidery at the GSA; and eventually needlework won its place as a valid art form through their efforts.[41]

When Newbery assumed his position as Headmaster, there were no female instructors on staff.[42] In the year in which the Macdonald sisters enrolled, two out of eight instructors were women.[43] Two years later Jessie Dunlop became responsible for "Artistic Needlework taught by a lady"; and in the following year Stained Glass, Wood and Stone Carving, Pottery, Bookbinding, Repousse and Metalwork were offered and taught primarily by women "in a room specially fitted up" with the most modern conveniences and equipment then available.[44] By the time the Macdonald sisters graduated in 1894, five women — teaching exclusively crafts subjects — were on staff.[45]

The relatively uncommon circumstances which permitted access to female instructors was not, at least for Margaret Macdonald, a new experience. On April 24, 1877, at the age of 12 years, 5 months, Margaret Macdonald entered the Orme Girls' School, being the girls' section of Newcastle-Under-Lyme

School. Founded in 1876, Orme was the first grammar school for girls in North Staffordshire, and considered a pioneering institution in the field of female education. In that year she was amongst the thirty new girls who swelled enrollment in the institution from its original 54 pupils. When she left in December 1880 at age 16, the number had grown to 150. The curriculum she undertook included French, Botany, Natural Philosophy, Piano, Singing, German and Drawing; four of which classes (French, Singing, Piano and German) were taught by women. Margaret's drawing instructor was a Mr. Bacon, then Headmaster of Newcastle Art School. It has been noted that the school placed greater significance on art than other institutions, though there were numerous art schools in the vicinity for training employees of the indigenous pottery industry. It may also be particularly relevant that the school was governed by a Headmistress, Miss Martin, who perhaps served as a strong role model for its students. The quality she maintained in her institution is reflected in a subsequent publication of *Keates Directory*:[46]

> "The educational requirements for the district are better provided for than any other town of the same population in the Kingdom".[47]

None of the sources to date have been able to determine the extent of Frances' training prior to her entrance in the GSA, nor has research yielded information on Margaret's activities between the time of her departure from Ormes in 1880 and her enrollment at the GSA in 1890. The fact that she was still unmarried on entering the GSA might suggest that she had been preparing herself for a career outside, rather than inside, the home. As the daughter of a reputable estate agent, it is unlikely that she worked as a shop assistant and less so that she would have been employed by a pottery. It is

known that Margaret's brother Charles was studying law in Glasgow in 1881; and that her father John moved to Glasgow in approximately 1889, at which time Margaret and Frances were aged 25 and 17 respectively. It might logically be presumed that for Margaret at least, living and being educated in the potteries of England instilled an interest in the applied arts. The extent of her contact — if any — with English artists and groups (for instance, the Pre–Raphaelites, Whistler, and members of the Arts & Crafts Movement) prior to 1890 is unknown. Given the absence of biographical data on Margaret and Frances during these earlier periods, it is difficult to evaluate whether the GSA can rightfully claim that the sisters' artistic development — in particular the evaluation of their earlier controversial female imagery — was entirely dependent upon its teaching methodology.

Certainly much of their work — particularly the decorative designs — is difficult, if not impossible, to attribute specifically to either sister, in part because they often worked in close collaboration. Having enrolled in the same year, they shared the same classmates and were required to undertake identical programs. Subsequent to the mandatory basic course initiated by Newbery which taught the skills of modelling, drawing and painting, they were offered a post–basic course in one of four sections of the School: Drawing and Painting; Modelling and Sculpture; Architecture; and Design and Decoration. They both chose the latter. Their decision did not exclude them from rigorous drawing sessions, however, for Newbery's focus (notwithstanding the proclaimed emphasis on design and decoration), was emphatically on drawing as the foundation of art.[48]

The success of Newbery's teaching methodology may be measured not

only by the emergence of the innovative "Glasgow Style" which survived into the 1920's, but also in the number of awards and scholarships earned by his students. In his first year as Headmaster, his report indicates that

> It is gratifying to find that the study of the Human Figure is making good progress in the School as is shown by the fact that in addition to the Silver Medal and other Prizes for Antique, a National Award was given for a drawing of a nude figure in black and white, and another for a painting in oil of a full length, also from the living model. It is unnecessary to particularize, but one lady, Miss Christiana S. Anderson, passed all four subjects of second grade examinations taking the highest rank. . .and excelled in each.[49]

The 1888 Annual Reports of the School state that its students received in excess of the aggregate number of awards collectively achieved by other schools in Scotland, placing second in the United Kingdom.[50] In 1889 the GSA gained the highest national award, the "Prince of Wales Scholarship". One year later the coveted Haldane Travelling Scholarship was awarded to a woman, (Stansmore Dean) for the first time.[51] As the *Mail* somewhat begrudgingly admitted:

> The success of the female students has been very marked, no fewer than six national prizes and twenty third-grade prizes being taken by them this year, and the gaining of the Haldane Scholarship by a lady student would point out that the higher education of women is being attempted in the school with some success.[52]

Five years later, a report from a public meeting at the GSA notes a complaint that students' work was now "too feminine."[53]

Much of the criticism levelled at the Macdonald sisters challenged their artistic merit. One protester wrote that "To disguise mediocrity by the assumption of the extraordinary is a cheap way to pass as a genius."[54] Another source referred to the School of Spook images as "inferior

hallucinations in colour and design."[55] These allegations carry little weight in light of the Macdonald sisters' acknowledged accomplishments. The attached Appendix I provides a brief synopsis of the categories of National Competitions and Advanced Local Examinations in the South Kensington District, in which Margaret and Frances won awards. Notwithstanding the negative public reaction to the Macdonald sisters' figurative works, there can be no grounds for charging them with amateurism in light of their performances in anatomy, freehand drawing and model drawing.[56]

The public's criticism of Margaret and Frances indirectly implicated Newbery as Headmaster and figurehead, as one anonymous dissenter suggested:

> "However amusing these pictures may appear to the frivolous, they must sadden many who look to our young artists to carry on the traditions that have made the Glasgow School famous throughout the world."[57]

Newbery was not only prepared for criticism but staunchly defended the rights of his students to make original art independent of public expectation or taste. He responded to the negative public reaction with cool assurance and optimism, informing the media that

> "We expected this and were not cast down. The voice of the people is not always the voice of Art, and if the people are not educated in Art matters surely no compromise should be made by turning out stuff to meet their taste. Rather let them see what can be done — what has been done in France — and in time their standard of artistic taste will rise."[58]

Newbery championed individual and equal treatment of students, male or female. In his view the teaching power of the School was there to guide and direct, not to put itself in the place of the powers of the student. His

responsibilities included ". . .an intelligent and, above all, interesting course of teaching" in order to "draw out the latent powers of the student, and direct them into the right channel."[59] The GSA thus offered the Macdonald sisters and their contemporaries a uniquely liberated atmosphere in which they could seriously pursue virtually every avenue of artistic development. As Newbery declared in 1895, the "dilettante young lady who would decorate tambourines and milking stools with impossible forget–me–nots and sunflowers" had been ". . .entirely weeded out. She got no encouragement and is now, so far as the school is concerned, non–existent."[60]

## CHAPTER 3

## CONFLICTING IDEOLOGIES:

## ART, ARTISTS AND THE ACADEMY IN THE PERIODICAL PRESS

Presumably Newbery had eliminated the dilettante ladies of trivial artistic pursuits from his institution; however for the resolute female student who remained there were a number of expectations concerning the manner in which she should make art. Both the public and the official art establishment generated standards of evaluation. Since students seldom received public commissions during their formative years, public opinion carried less weight.[1] Official bodies such as the Royal Academy and various local artists' societies or clubs, however, had substantial impact on the development of any artist. Many of these, it has been pointed out, were fundamentally opposed to female students and in particular, objected to any women who strayed from mainstream subjects and styles. In the pages of the various periodicals circulating in the Glasgow area, an assortment of editors, art critics, artists and members of the public sector engaged in lengthy debates which, as previously noted, partly revolved around the validity of women in art schools. Others saw the surge of female enrollment in art schools as inevitable, and set themselves the task of articulating appropriate themes and formats for these impressionable art students.

Of the more influential British art periodicals then available to the

Macdonald sisters and their colleagues, the *Magazine of Art* (1878–1904) and *Art Journal* (1839–1911) most emphatically reflected the philosophies and politics of the Royal Academy, perhaps the more conservative body of the arts establishment. Their pages were well endowed with reproductions of current favourites from official art exhibitions but their tone was didactic and often extremely patronizing, particularly towards the lay community. As one writer pointed out in "Art and the Common People", the rank and file of readers of the *Magazine of Art* were "cultured and refined folk". Conversely, it defined Common people as

> . . .not the skilled artisans and clever mechanics who work with their hands, and are generally able to distinguish good handiwork, of whatever age or clime; but. . .some men in business with balances at the bank, and a good many women who wear silk gowns and are waited on by domestic servants.[2]

The article acknowledged the role that journals (aided by the government through its control of teaching institutions) played in ensuring that these common people be "taught the difference between loveliness and ugliness from their childhood up".[3]

Such art periodicals were an integral part of any art school's teaching aids, equipping the student with visual precedents and ideologies. As two of the more comprehensive art periodicals, the *Art Journal* and the *Magazine of Art* carried regular features which included synopses of exhibition work, Academy news, and articles on selected (invariably academic) artists. Rarely did these publications present the views of female artists or critics, nor were women the focus of specific reviews.[4] In fact, during the period 1890 until 1895, no more than eight of the approximately four hundred pictures

reproduced annually in the *Magazine of Art* were by women artists.[5]

The *Magazine of Art* and *Art Journal* consistently reiterated that women were best suited to portraits, landscapes and still–lives (particularly flower studies) which were the lowest forms of art in the academic hierarchy of genres. If women complied, they were criticized only if their work was considered technically deficient.[6]

A major issue in the assessment of women's work was the importance of "taking a likeness." This was primarily because more women were involved with portraiture than any other genre, although landscapes and still lives followed closely behind.[7] The *Magazine of Art* made its priorities clear where female students were concerned:

> The annual exhibition of the Royal Female School of Art is always of interest. The school was established long before the South Kensington movement, though it is now more or less affiliated to the Government system. Its strongest class has always been that of students of flower–painting and still–life. At the recent exhibition three water–colour drawings which were hung close together impressed us as astonishingly good work for girl students. The best of these was a daring study in blue of corncockles in a Flanders jar. . .[8]

A considerable amount of ink was also expended on teaching technical elements — again, within the parameters of academic values. For the novice, prominent artists contributed elaborate instruction on fundamental art techniques, such as "The Language of Line", "The Proper Mode and Study of Drawing" and "The Illustrating of Books", to name only a few such articles.[9] In short, the periodicals took an active role in establishing codes of expectation for the art student, the professional artist, and the public.

Judging from their titles, the Macdonald sisters' earliest known watercolors fell safely within these guidelines. The Royal Glasgow Institute of

the Fine Arts Exhibition catalogue for 1893 lists *Cornflowers* (1893) by Frances; *Geraniums* (the first documented work by Margaret) and *Flags* (both dated 1893) by Margaret.[10]

Margaret's *Summer* (c. 1893) (Fig. 1) was the first of several watercolors which radically departed from academic conventions. *The Path of Life*, (Fig. 2) is a similar work in its fragmentation of forms, and dates from approximately the same time. Both works appeared in the GSA student publication known as the *Magazine* in its April 1894 number, and in all probability were amongst the controversial images exhibited at the Glasgow School of Art Club Exhibition seven months later. *Summer* is acknowledged as one of the works which specifically provoked the Glasgow public into vocalizing its outrage through local newspapers, precipitating the label "School of Spook".[11]

In their linear separations, each resembles a design for stained glass. More significantly, this implies a religious connotation which would normally limit any unorthodox treatment of the figure. However, neither bears a title connecting it to a particular religious theme. *Summer* is clearly allegorical: a masculine Sun breathes life into the female earth through his kiss, the energy of which flows from her fingertips as seed droplets. The format and linear motion of the work create a vertical motion through which the seeds enlarge to kidney–shaped pods. These forms then evolve upwards as plant forms which become an extension of the female's hair. She is considerably more elongated than the male, whose elevated positioning (she must stand on tip–toe to meet him) and firm grasp inply dominance. The Sun's nudity is partially obscured by his crouching containment within a circular shape, and

by a horizontal bar which, in addition to being strategically placed, serves to further separate the two figures. Both figures are fragmented, but the greater exposure of the female figure enhances the sensation of dissected anatomical parts.

The three nude women in *Path of Life* are less fragmented; they are slender but not emaciated. The halos, the position of clasped hands, and floating appearance of the two flattened, clothed figures suggests a Byzantine prototype. The fragmenting of the three nude figures appears to be more arbitrary since it is primarily horizontal; perhaps to accommodate the limitations of stained glass design. The unclothed central figure is the least distorted of these earlier images. She appears to be taking a tentative step forward, and is flanked by two figures closely resembling the *Summer*'s image. The heads of these flanking figures appear to be almost painfully forced back by the pull of their hair, which is again absorbed into the design. Much of the symbolic content of *Summer* is absent; and the composition, lacking the organic forms of *Summer*, is more rigid and rectilinear.

*Path of Life* is clearly related stylistically to two works by Frances Macdonald which also appeared in the same issue of the GSA periodical. *The Crucifixion* and *The Ascension* (Fig. 3 and 5) employ similar imagery, but all figures are partially clothed. Details of each (Fig. 4 and 6) illustrate the manner in which the womens' hair is again incorporated into the overall graphic design. The distortion of the three central figures of *Crucifixion* is intensified by facial contortions: their heads appear to be jerked backwards in order to conform with the circular motion of the design structure. Walter Crane's technical advice, published in the *Magazine of Art*, comes to mind:–

> The human figure, being the most adaptable of all forms, lends itself to treatment in filling spaces. . .In adapting a figure to fill a particular proportioned space in decoration, for instance, one would think of it as a mass capable of infinite variation, either as a dark upon a lighter ground, or light upon a dark ground, and requiring modification accordingly. If we were to place a figure on the principle of even symmetrical balance in a panel. . .it would be felt to be rather a dull affair. We should try to vary it as much as possible — we should think of an idea — a *motif* for the action of our figure. . .and so we should be led on to vary and enrich according to the aim of our design.[12]

Of *Crucifixion* and *Ascension*, only photographs remain; therefore it is impossible to comment on whether or not they were faulted for technical deficiencies. *Summer*, however, was criticized for its vivid greens and lilacs, and for the emaciated state of the female figure. None of the criticism from the period suggests that the symbolism or nakedness of the figures was negatively perceived as erotic.

It is important to remember that the GSA was fundamentally a school of design, and as such, its students would have been aware of — and likely influenced by — the standards established by South Kensington's examiners at the National Competitions.[13] This group included many leading figures of the Arts & Crafts Movement, notably William Morris, Walter Crane, Lewis Day and Alan S. Cole. These examiners also lectured periodically at the GSA and, as previously mentioned, contributed to the *Magazine of Art* and other major art publications.

None of the foregoing works conforms to the aesthetic mandates of the Arts & Crafts Movement, which included a reliance on medieval craftsmanship (and implicitly a romantic nostalgia for that era) and, as preferred forms, flattened or stylized flowers, leaves and other natural elements presented in a

geometric, often symmetrical structure.[14] The extent to which *Summer* and *Path of Life* departed from current Arts & Crafts aesthetics may be illustrated through a comparison of these works with designs for stained glass by Edward Burne–Jones. As one of the principal designers of the Movement, Burne–Jones worked closely with William Morris in design and manufacture of various utilitarian objects.[15] *Love Leading the Pilgrim* (Fig. 7) reflects the Pre–Raphaelite Brotherhood's taste for flattened, painstakingly enunciated detail and figures authentically ensconced in a medieval setting. Color is equally true to nature: it is non–arbitrary and again faithful to the primary colors of medieval stained–glass. By contrast Margaret's use of color in *Summer* appears arbitrary, though it is likely symbolic given the allegorical nature of the figures and the more obvious association of the color green with summer vegetation and growth.

In addition to these departures from Arts & Crafts aesthetics, it is worth considering whether the nudity of the female images — but not the distortion — escaped censure because the drawings appeared to be specifically intended for stained glass design. Despite Arts & Crafts dicta, on the Continent and to a lesser extent in Britain the female form was widely used as decorative ornament for utilitarian objects: Art Nouveau artists applied such figures nude or clothed in clinging gowns to a multitude of objects ranging from ashtrays, vases and mirrors to furniture. Rarely did these figures feature exaggerated anatomical parts (for instance, the enlarged hands characteristic of Macdonald sisters' images), although they were often slenderized to accommodate the sinuous, curvilinear line of Art Nouveau design. However, the academic conventions pertaining to the naturalistic nude had considerably less relevance

when applied to the three–dimensional objects known as "art manufactures," since they were not regarded as "fine art."

Whether the Glasgow public viewed these images as designs for three–dimensional objects or two–dimensional paintings is uncertain; but in light of the controversies surrounding the nude or partially draped female figure, it is clear that Margaret and Frances would have been perceived by some critics as blatantly violating academic norms. The scarcity of the nude figure in major art publications such as the *Magazine of Art* and the *Art Journal* is evidence that even respectable male artists approached the subject with caution. Certainly the women artists who dared to take on the nude invariably became entangled in an ongoing moral debate.

The art criticism of daily newspapers fuelled this controversy. Like the art periodical, they also served as mouthpieces for the Academy and the artistic community. One particular exchange reveals the stigma attached to women who painted from "the living model." Aside from the sheer volume of space devoted to the article (proof of the public's involvement and concern), the incident is also noteworthy since it provides some insight into the forces which challenged the GSA's teaching methodologies and more particularly, the contentious climate in which the Macdonald sisters' nude figures were received. In the autumn of 1885 Mr. J.C. Horsley presented a paper on "Art Schools and Art Practice in their Relation to a Moral and Religious Life" to the Church Congress at Portsmouth.[16]

The local newspaper which reported on Horsley's paper referred to "a sweeping denunciation of nude models by a Royal Academician, with terrible revelations respecting the methods pursued and their demoralising influence

upon lady artists and sculptors" as the leading feature of the Second Sitting of that Congress. Horsley described the "wave of infidelity now passing over the land" as attributable to much of the evil rampant in art practice — an evil which, when developed in female students, could only be considered in all Christian charity as a veritable madness.[17] Having been connected with the South Kensington School District several years earlier, Horsley declared that in his day not a shilling was expended on naked female models since such practice was forbidden to male students; no one at the time ever dreaming of such means of study for female students. But, he continued,

> "Now all is changed! At the South Kensington Exhibition this year, of student work selected for rewards from the various Government schools, there were only three studies of naked women, but all done by female students, thus trained at the public expense to assist in the degradation of their sex."[18]

Horsley also described the mode of instruction for such studies in South Kensington:

> A male and female teacher sit together with the naked model before them from whom the drawings to be supervised have been made. He criticizes, and she subsequently conveys his remarks to the students.[19]

This arrangement, however, had sunk to "a still lower level of debasement" in one of the chief provincial cities, where the "middle woman" was dispensed with, thus allowing the master direct interaction with a class of female students drawing and painting from a naked female model.

The GSA qualified as a target for Horsley's reproach. Headmaster Thomas Simmonds' Report for 1882–83 refers to the Advanced Local Examinations in Drawing from the Nude Life, stating that two students were

successful and claiming that

> the arrangement of the Life Classes is the most complete in the Kingdom, with the single exception of South Kensington, and both male and female students can study either during the day or in the evening.[20]

Life classes for women existed at least as early as 1881: a GSA letterbook includes a timetable for June of that year, recording that the Headmaster, Robert Greenlees, taught a Ladies Life Class twice weekly. These were still available to the Macdonald sisters in the 1890's, as the Local Examination Results and Prospectus of 1893–94 indicates.[21] While it is difficult to conclusively establish the availability of the nude model in segregated classes, it is safe to conclude that the Macdonald sisters had access to nude (undraped) models without the intervention of a "middle" person.[22]

This kind of miserable work for female students, according to Horsley, was useless from a professional point of view for "even if they gained any increase of skill from such study it is quite inapplicable to forms of art–work within the encompass of their powers to execute successfully." Women, it appeared, were simply not qualified to portray the nude with any degree of expertise; and those who attempted it were subject to an "unholy affect on character".[23] This leads one to question whether any such stigma applied to female students portraying the male nude, assuming they were given the opportunity. The records of the GSA do not consistently state the sex of the "living model" employed for drawing classes; however the Report of the Government Inspector dated 18/19 November, 1977, records that in evening classes approximately twelve students were painting in oil from the nude male model. (It does not give the students' gender.) With the exception of

Margaret's *Summer* (which partially obscures the male figure) none of the surviving works of the Macdonald sisters or the other partners of "The Glasgow Four" presents the male nude.

This is interesting in light of the fact that many Royal Academy members preferred the male figure as model. As an eminent member had apparently informed Horsley,

> "The male figure is, or ought to be, the staple of the student's study. I consider the drawing of the female figure but poor practice. . .and for educational reasons, combined with others of far higher consideration, employment of naked models should be abandoned in all art schools."[24] (Horsley did not identify the "eminent" Royal Academy member.)

That same "eminent member" (to use Horsley's words) withdrew from the practice upon becoming a member of the Academy:–

> "Never since I became a member of the Royal Academy have I done an act which seems to be so wanting in manliness and common propriety as to ask a girl to sit before me naked; and now that I have overpassed my half–century of life, I am not likely to change my practice."[25]

Such deplorable art–mania was, in the words of these Academy members, far removed from the noble traditions of art and needless for the progress of modern art.[26]

Horsley's audience apparently loudly applauded his paper throughout, and one clergyman proposed the boycotting of exhibitions where the nude was exhibited.[27] It is important to note the similarity between this type of censorship and the Glasgow public's reaction to the Macdonald sisters' "ghoulish" figures (most of which were nudes). As cited earlier, in the latter case, *Quiz* called the images "offences" which should rightfully be under the

jurisdiction of police authority. Such offences may well have been perceived as sacrilegious, since according to some people clothing was tied to religion. In Horsley's words,

> Clothedness is a distinct type and feature of our Christian faith; for we worship One who, in the apocalypt vision, was seen clothed from head to foot, who himself enforced the duty of clothing the naked, and who permitted the record of that touching evidence of returning sanity to the demoniac of the tombs in that he sat at His feet: 'clothed and in his right mind'.

Many would therefore have concurred with his opinion that artists who portrayed nude women rode on a "wave of infidelity. . .they are unbelievers or agnostics".[28]

Horsley's views and the attention he attracted did not go unnoticed by Headmaster Newbery, who retained this along with other articles (most of which related to the GSA, its students' accomplishments, and the South Kensington School District) in his Press Cuttings Book.[29] Given Newbery's close contact and relationship with his students and the contentious nature of the article, it is probable that GSA students were aware of this source of opposition. It may be recalled that Newbery assumed his position as Headmaster in the same year (1885) and, as GSA records and other commentary prove, consciously chose not to structure his classes on Horsley's (as representative of the Academy's) principles.[30]

Similarly, Horsley's views were not necessarily those of all established artists — Academy members or otherwise. From the barrage of protests from the art community, the *Pall Mall Budget* included some of Glasgow's principal artists (many of whom were Royal Academy graduates). G.F. Watts thought Horsley's notions absurd, commenting that "the sight of a naked woman in the

schools is not half so impure as the undressing that fashionable women subject themselves to when they go out to parties."[31]

Most of the responses confirmed that the study of the nude was sacred in art practice. As Watts declared,

> to *emasculate* [writer's italics] art by suppressing the study and representation of the nude — which, I repeat, is absolutely the highest form of pictorial art — is simple prudery, not delicacy; with the only result of setting narrow limits to our art and putting blinkers on our imagination, and such an emasculated art *must* fail to rise to the higher sensibility.[32]

It is interesting to consider the descriptive language used by the two opposing forces: the "eminent Royal Academician" thought it "wanting in manliness" to sit before a nude female model; while Watts equated the elimination of nude female models with the castration of art.

There was also the question of a nude model's virtue. To Horsley, she was as equally degenerate as the female art students who portrayed her. "To put the case plainly from a Christian point of view", he claimed,

> . . .if pictures or statues of naked women are to be executed, living naked women must be employed as models, but where is the justification in God's sight for those who induce women so to ignore their natural modesty and quench their sense of true shame as to expose their nakedness before men, and thus destroy all that is pure and lovely in their womanhood?[33]

Nude or partially draped, women who sat as models were merely "still life", but other artists perceived them as degraded human beings.[34] Most artists agreed that generally speaking, models were perfectly modest, respectable women, though one artist admitted that some were drawn from the ranks of fallen women. The latter, however, derived from a "contaminated" (as opposed to "professional") class.[35]

The artists who responded to Horsley's published commentary also argued that clothing (or an absence thereof) was not the central issue. In Walter Crane's view,

> It is solely the spirit which animates artist or spectator. An undraped figure may be perfectly chaste, as under natural conditions and naturally regarded it always is, and a clothed one may be quite the reverse. It is capable of being made, in fact, far more objectionable than the first.[36]

More specifically, another artist held that

> the sight of an entirely nude woman is not demoralizing; and especially not so suggestive as a partially draped woman. Take as an example the celebrated statue of the Venus de Medici: put stockings on it, and it becomes indecent at once.[37]

The figures in the group of "Ex Libris" and invitation programs discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter qualify as partially draped, but it is unlikely that anyone would consider these erotic. However, as Walter Crane had pointed out, these could be made even more objectionable than nude images. Evidently the people who viewed *A Pond* (Fig. 24) and Frances' other designs for book covers and art school invitations (Fig. 9, 10, and 11) agreed — the figures in *A Pond* would appear to be the "two-headed serpentine dancer" which convinced one spectator that he had to stop drinking.[38] It is probable that *A Pond* was one of the Macdonald sisters' designs which also provoked the following comment in the *Glasgow Evening News*:

> How a person with any pretensions to sanity can look at the caricature of a dissipated lay model with anything but amused pity is more than I can understand. 'All flesh is grass', we are told, but that is surely no reason why their figures should all be coloured such a baleful green.[39]

These figures do resemble caricatures: they are, of all the early Macdonald sisters' images, the most extreme in that regard. The two women bear some resemblance to Margaret's *Summer* figure in that they also are fragmented; but the drawing is clearly meant as a poster or calendar page, and not a design for stained glass. At first glance they appear nude but in fact are clothed in what appears to be diaphanous Pre–Raphaelite dress; in essence a parody of the typically long, medieval gown worn by the women in paintings by Burne–Jones, Hunt, Millais, Rossetti and others of that group. These Pre–Raphaelite artists were well known for their promotion of a specific image of "ideal beauty" which was also espoused by the prevailing Aesthetic Movement.[40] Walter Hamilton, writing in 1882 comments that this aestheticism was projected into every form of life:

> It is in the portrayal of female beauty that aesthetic art is most peculiar, both in conception as of what constitutes female loveliness, and in the treatment of it. The type most usually found is that of a pale distraught lady with matted dark auburn hair falling in masses over the brow, and shading eyes full of lovelorn langour, or feverish despair; emaciated cheeks and somewhat heavy jaws; protruding upper lip, the lower lip being indrawn, long craned neck, flat breasts, and long thin nervous hands.[41]

The identical twins in *A Pond* represent an extreme form of some of these physical attributes: their total emaciation is reinforced by the vertical sectioning of their bodies; their neck and jaws project forward in a grotesque grimace; they are (if one disregards the illusion of sagging breasts created by the sleeves of their garments) flat–chested, with painfully contorted hands. The matted, flowing hair of the Aesthetic beauty has, in the hands of Frances Macdonald, become a strange flat bulbous shape echoed by the smaller, malevolent–looking pods. The degree to which Frances satirizes the ideal

Pre–Raphaelite beauty are clearly illustrated by a comparison of *A Pond* with Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Astarte Syriaca* of 1877 (Fig. 25). Frances appears to have appropriated the two flanking, near–identical female figures, exaggerated their dramatic hand and facial gestures, and utterly stripped them of their maudlin sensuality.

Given the widespread exposure of ideal or aesthetic beauty personified by the Pre–Raphaelite female, and particularly the fact that she actually existed in the person of Jane Morris, (the wife and previous model of William Morris) Frances' women could hardly have been more deviant. They are a mockery of what some sectors of the fashionable bourgeoisie of that era aspired towards, and are also the antithesis of the "pretty woman" or "piece de resistance", as George du Maurier, writing in the *Magazine of Art*, called his popular creation of the period:–

> She is rather tall, I admit, and a trifle stiff; but Englishwomen *are* tall and stiff just now, and she is rather too serious; but that is only because I find it so difficult with a mere stroke in black ink, to indicate the enchanting little curved lines that go from the nose to the mouth–corners, causing the cheeks to make a smile — and without them the smile is incomplete, merely a grin. . .And as for the height, I have often begun by drawing the dear creature *little*, and found that by one sweep of the pen (adding a few inches to the bottom of her skirt) I have improved her so much that it has been impossible to resist the temptation. . .I beg the reader's forgiveness for this outburst of senile paternal egotism.[42]

Du Maurier also describes the "pretty women" of Dickens, Cruickshank, Sir John Gilbert and John Leech as sweet, graceful, ladylike and innocent, but concedes that Sir John Millais' pretty woman is the ultimate; "not too good for human nature's daily food but so utterly good *enough*".[43] Notwithstanding the many departures in physical appearance, it would be difficult to attach the

desired moral virtues of the Aesthetic, Pre–Raphaelite or "pretty woman" so cherished by writers such as du Maurier to any of the Macdonald sisters' early images. At best they may be allegorical (as in the case of *Summer*) but they are never martyred; obviously the public found them to be aggressive and threatening. One wonders if, in striving for independence and originality, the Macdonald sisters were reacting to an article which appeared in the January, 1893 issue of the *Magazine of Art*. The writer declared that English art still suffered from the excessively conservative spirit of its patrons:

> At the beginning of the Victorian era art was at its very lowest ebb. The young lady students of the period were copying those impossible lithographed heads which formed the stock–in–trade of the drawing–master, or those fashion–plate Venuses whose necks recalled the proportions of the giraffe, with the eyelashes of a wax doll, and fingers that tapered off like the point of a pencil. These sirens of the drawing–board were invariably smelling a rose, or kissing a canary, and always had a weakness for pearls. They used to be drawn upon tinted paper, and when the faces had been duly smeared over with the stump to suggest shadow, and after the drawing–master had endowed the work with artistic merit by the application of white chalk to the high lights, the pearls, the canaries' eyes, and the pathetic teardrops upon the damsels' faces, the immortal productions were ready for framing. The giraffe or swan–necked angel was the keynote for all ideal work, and even the recognised artists of those days — with one or two brilliant exceptions — followed in her train.[44]

The writer credited "the late aesthetic craze" with significant improvement in colour and design of dress and art surroundings, but stressed that all students of design and imaginative art should aim at originality:

> After a student has digested the best work of the masters in the particular branch of art he intends to pursue he should search his own brain and try, if possible, to out–do them. He must be an inventor, not a mere copyist. . .it is that lack or originality, that lack of self–confidence in ourselves, that is the cause of our allowing foreign countries to show us the way which we but follow.[45]

His concern with foreign influence was reiterated in an editorial contained in

the *Magazine of Art*, wherein another author declared that "the artists of England owed a debt of gratitude" to a professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy:

> It is something of a novelty in these days of realism on the one hand, and impressionism on the other, to come across a professor who has the boldness to assert that there is a beauty of the human figure which is apart from any mere copying, however accurate, of the human model; that human models have defects which are not to be reproduced; that it is the duty of an artist to cultivate his natural perception of beauty of line and surface. . .[46]

The editorial also infers a specifically British, or national, canon of ideal beauty. Conversely, the reference to impressionism (inherently French) is made in the same context as realism, which is frequently termed crude or vulgar in these journals.[47]

A reader would thus conclude that exaggeration and other devices, such as subjective interpretation of the human form, were liberties to which the artist was entitled, provided the end result conformed with the prevailing academic (British) standards of ideal beauty.

The *Art Journal* and the *Magazine of Art* seldom featured "foreign" contemporary artists, though they did include Renaissance painters and sculptors as well as recently "rediscovered" artists from the earlier part of the 19th or previous centuries. The notion of prescribed aesthetics based on classical canons was therefore reinforced throughout.[48]

It has been pointed out that exhibition reviews of current art invariably focused upon artists from established local groups such as the Royal Society of British Artists, the Royal Academy, the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolors and the New English Art Club, with emphasis on painting and a general avoidance of design. The relative absence of foreign artists therefore

implied the primacy of British art. As Holman Hunt asserted when addressing students in the *Magazine of Art*, patronage of foreigners was proof of their superiority. Moreover, the participation of Continental artists in British exhibitions threatened English art by impoverishing native artists, notwithstanding that British art had, "from the days of Hogarth, been incomparably above that of any other country of modern epoch."[49] An anonymous contributor to the *Art Journal* concurred, offering his condensed version of the rapid and successful evolution of British art:

> Looking at the histories of the various schools of painting since the revival of Art, it may be affirmed, without fear of contradiction, that not one presents a case of rapid improvement parallel to our own. It occupied the Italians three centuries from the thirteenth to the fifteenth to develop their school, and another century firmly to establish it. Fifty years have sufficed to place England on a level with the best Art-epoch of the continent.[50]

This strong sense of a national style or preference was not extraordinary given the firmly entrenched, academic focus of these periodicals. Any deviation in ideology or style, however, would capture the attention of the inquisitive art student. Since the early images of the Macdonald sisters signified a vehement rejection of the canons of beauty discussed, they may have derived from precisely those forces which threatened to imperil British art; namely, foreign art.

As various recent publications suggest, these images by Margaret and Frances reflect strong affiliations with the Symbolists, particularly the Belgians.[51] In this context, an extensive essay published in an 1891 edition of the *Magazine of Art* on Symbolist artist Fernand Khnopff (a rare exception to the predominance of British artists) validates his art as "the power of a searching intellect over the haphazard effects of the modern Belgian school."[52]

The writer inquires into the causes which drive painters to symbolism, concluding that Khnopff's compositions appeal only to a select group of artists and thinkers:

> Is it the effect of early education and of peculiar surroundings upon a disposition abnormally sensitive and precocious? Is it the natural rebound from the vivisection of naturalism, the desire to see truth truly, but without her magnified ulcers? Both, without doubt, foster an inborn tendency to mysticism.[53]

Technically or stylistically, there is little connection between the five illustrated paintings of women and the Macdonald sisters' images: their commonality is the degree to which both depart from academic norms. Khnopff's *The Sphinx* is part woman, part animal:

> An enigma — a mystery — a sphinx riddle — the heart of womankind! — fascinating us away off like a distant horizon; repelling us on drawing closer in thought; tempting us, half cruelly, half-spiritually.[54]

The dazzling Venus in *Le Vice Supreme* (which was not illustrated in the magazine)

> shrinks with maidenly prudence from sight, her face challenges the eyes of all, and covets the longing of all. There is a triumphant gleam in her cruel eyes, a disdainful leer about the mouth. Her victories are so easy, she can afford to despise and hate. . .[55]

Khnopff was mentioned briefly one year later in an editorial which made reference to a new Parisian order which, despite its "childish" features, had some potential:

> The attempt to establish a society of artistic Rosicrucians has doubtless some allurements for those minds which love to play at Jesuitry and mysticism, and, girl-like, to "have a secret". Like the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the Society aims at artistic reform. As the Brotherhood was a protest against the inanities, conventions, and

> the generalisations of the day, and braved ridicule in carrying out its tenets of "sincerity", so the new Rosicrucians exist to proclaim by the work of their hand against the triumph of brushwork and the excess of realism.[56]

The editorial emphasized that "we should not have referred to them were it not for the eminent artists who are said to be among the chosen few of the elect".[57] Fernand Khnopff was one of those eminent artists.[58]

The mandates of the Salon de la Rose + Croix, as it was also known, included the obliteration of realism: this accordingly demanded wholesale rejection of history painting, patriotic/military painting, portraits, landscapes, anecdotal works, domestic animals and those relating to sport, and lastly "flowers, still–life, fruits, accessories and other exercises that painters ordinarily have the effrontery to exhibit".[59] The *Magazine of Art* summarized these as "Portraits of ill–favoured persons. . .all but handsome persons, all pictures of realism, ugliness, and still life in all forms (together with pictures however beautiful and religious from a female hand)." If the Order succeeded in determining a standard of the "beautiful", the *Magazine of Art* declared, they could establish their claim to immortality.[60]

None of the works authored by Rosicrucian members were illustrated; therefore there were no visual precedents to illustrate the existential precepts of the Order. The *Magazine of Art* acknowledged them as self–proclaimed fanatics seeking to "overthrow the fetish of 'fine execution,' to stamp out the dilettantism of methods".[61] Appeal would likely have stemmed from their societal nature, which resembled the more familiar Pre–Raphaelite Brotherhood, and their declared, reformist attitude.

Of the few artists who are acknowledged as potential influences on the Macdonald sisters, only two, the British artists Rossetti and Burne–Jones

(whose work would have been known to the Macdonald sisters through a number of sources) are given coverage of any significance in the pages of the *Magazine of Art*.[62] Jan Toorop, who is frequently referred to as an important source, is only briefly mentioned by reference to his "Dreams on Canvas" without further elaboration or illustration. Toorop's mention is in conjunction with two other younger, militant members of the Belgian group of Symbolist painters known as "XX".[63]

Generally speaking, avant-garde art and ideologies were alluded to as foreign and vaguely unorthodox. Given the generic quality of illustrations contained in these magazines, however, any variations would have held heightened appeal for the more inquisitive art student, particularly those who aligned themselves with newer strains of art. Therefore, if one searches these mainstream art periodicals for visual prototypes which might conceivably have served the radical images of the Macdonald sisters, it must be concluded that they offered virtually little or nothing, notwithstanding a professed respect — even demand — for original work. Their definition of original, and similarly the established standard of ideal beauty or the "beautiful", was a relative term couched in the narrow context of the British Academy; thus it precluded a receptive climate for deviant forms.

The significance of these journals lies in their denial or omission of certain art, artists and ideologies. More specifically, their rigid posture towards gender issues in art represented a solid front sanctioned by the official arts establishment. In the case of the Macdonald sisters' focus on the nude or semi-draped female form, a further caveat was imposed, and the parameters narrowed considerably. As Horsley's account illustrated, the morality of female

artists who adopted this practice was open to attack: associations of impropriety on the part of the nude model implicitly attached to the women who drew or painted from them. As arbiters and instructors of taste (in the service of the official Academy) these journals assumed a key role in ensuring that all of these attitudes were heavily inscribed in both the artistic and public sector. The extent to which they shaped and colored the public's perception of art was in turn borne out by the extensive coverage the daily periodicals granted their readers, both in coverage of contentious issues and as vehicles through which the public expressed its reaction.

Margaret and Frances' reaction to these forces was communicated in the form of provocative images which desecrated the stereotypical academic nude; in essence a challenge to the sacrosanct notion that access to and interpretation of the nude model was exclusively the jurisdiction of male artists.

The role of these mainstream art journals, as it affected the Macdonald sisters and their female colleagues, was therefore antithetical to their intent and purpose. Instead they functioned as bastions of mediocrity and bias against which artistic innovations might be measured. In much the same way they gave rise to an assemblage of smaller, often local, art periodicals (often socialist in nature) which were more intimately connected with the issues confronting young artists. This eruption of new art journals — one of which was a direct commentary on the status of female GSA students — was strong evidence of the power of the periodical, regardless of its orientation and intent.

## CHAPTER 4

## THE QUINTESSENTIAL *MAGAZINE* AND ITS SOURCES
## ART THROUGH THE EYES OF "L'IGNORANCE"

In reaction to the heavily pedantic tones of the *Art Journal* and the *Magazine of Art*, and as an expression of their independence, a group of Newbery's female students created their own version of an art periodical. Margaret and Frances played a significant role in this short-lived publication known as the *Magazine*. All four of these hand-written, single-number issues survive as testimony to the energies and confidence of these women; for with few exceptions the contents are comprised of writings and images produced by their hands. This publication also offers some insight into the preferred themes and range of styles adopted by its contributors, and further proof of the degree to which the images of the Macdonald sisters departed from those of their contemporaries.

Significantly, production of the *Magazine* began six months subsequent to the founding, in 1893, of an extremely successful design-oriented periodical, the *Studio, an Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art* and also followed or coincided with the emergence of several smaller, polemical art magazines, some of which affected the type of work produced at the GSA and in its art periodical. Where the mainstream art periodicals (*e.g. Magazine of Art, Art Journal*) failed, these publications provided a vital range of eclectic visual

material to provoke the imagination, and the type of ideas that appealed to female artists interested in design. *Studio*, as it became known, firmly established itself as a quality magazine which upheld the notion that the arts and crafts, (including furniture design, decorative objects, photography and graphics) held an equal place with the academic pursuits of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Since its objective was to elevate an overall standard of aesthetic sensibility (a loose parallel to the mandates of more academic journals), it concerned itself with very contemporary, often controversial artistic topics.[1]

The smaller alternative art publications which included the Century Guild's *Hobby Horse*, (1886–1892), *Scottish Art Review*, (Glasgow, June 1888 – December 1889), Charles Rickett's *Dial*, (London, 1889), John Lane's *The Yellow Book*, (1894–97) and Patrick Geddes' *Evergreen* (Edinburgh, 1895) took on a socialist flavour which appealed to the young artist seeking avant–grade styles and ideologies. However these magazines provided somewhat limited offerings as source material for the Macdonald sisters. This was primarily because many were not produced during the sisters' formative period at the GSA (1890–94) or else were short–lived affairs. Nevertheless, it is interesting to consider what impact (if any) the symbolist "School of Spook" images of the Macdonald sisters, which originated in the *Magazine*, had on the illustrators of some of these subsequent publications, notably *Evergreen* and the *Yellow Book*. Most of the Macdonald sisters' submissions to the *Magazine* were related to thematic graphic designs for book covers, posters and invitation cards eventually exhibited or reproduced for public consumption. Regardless of whether or not the *Magazine* found its way to artists outside the GSA, it was an important vehicle through which the Macdonald sisters and their

contemporaries could present their own written and visual expressions without restraint.

The *Magazine's* first issue was simply dated "1894" and its frontispiece, a drawing by Frances Macdonald entitled "Eve" (Fig. 9), acknowledged Lucy Raeburn as the self-appointed editor. As such Raeburn also assumed the role of critic and evaluator of her fellow students. Raeburn's first and only critique of her contemporaries was contained in this issue. Entitled "Round the Studios" and signed by "L'Ignorance, Lucy Raeburn," its date is given as October, 1893. Many of the drawings in this issue were therefore completed during the 1893 school term or, in the case of the Macdonald sisters, were from their third year of studies at the School.[2]

In addition to the Ex Libris (*Eve*) by Frances, the other ten drawings and paintings inserted in the first issue were by other female students, often functioning as illustrations of accompanying poems or short stories.[3] Lucy Raeburn gave a candid (if somewhat subjective) account of the Macdonald sisters and their contemporaries' current achievements:

> To begin with, the brilliant Sisters Macdonald have some work which ravished my artistic "Soule" by its originality of idea, tho' perhaps in execution somethings is to be desired.
>
> The Younger's colour schemes made me ask myself tenderly, "Is it possible your eye for harmony is out of tune?" I never could abide crude blues; they always make me think of the washtub. A very much woe-stricken soul would no doubt feel its grief embodied in her clever stain glass window design "Despair" representing two figures whose sorrow has worn them to shadows, and whose tears have watered their eyelashes and made them grow to rather an alarming extent. Her "Children Blowing Dandelions" was very cheering, the bright effects made my dry my eyes while "Reflections" — well, on reflection I will not say anything about it. Too original for me to get the hang of. The elder sister trotted out her productions next. "Soldier, Sailor, Tinker, *etc.*" is very charming in its unfinished condition and to me is the nicest thing she has ever done, showing great improvement and promise of better to come. Go on, prosper my young Friends, I expect to hear of you in wider circles soon.[4] (Lucy

Raeburn, "Round the Studios", the *Magazine*, 1894, p. 22–25.)

Raeburn, it would appear, had little quarrel with originality in the Macdonald sisters' works. While she evidently respected this quality in their work, she felt they were devoid of the usual historical or contemporary context which normally served as a reference. This meant that in effect, her ability to comprehend their meaning was inhibited by their originality. In these and other students' works, it was the execution or technical aspect of pictures that attracted negative criticism. The "crude blues" in Frances' drawing, Miss Cameron's "muddy and murky" pansies, and the "colors rather to the thick side" in Janet Aitken's flower studies drew rebukes.

Raeburn's reticence where "original" was concerned also indicates the degree of deviance in the Macdonald sisters' work as well as a certain ambiguity in the term itself. Describing Janet Aitken's portraitures and their evident realism, Raeburn admits that it is a "relief to come down to the prose of everyday life after seeing such imaginative work which quite ordinary people like myself feel to be the sweets of life and best taken in small quantities."[5] Similarly, a piece by another artist entitled *Girls Playing in a Wood* was too affected while another artist's typical rendition of still–life obviously held more appeal:

> "Poor things, they all rejoice in long skirts not to speak of, trains, but that is the artistic way they play tag in *lach–a–daisy land* (writer's italics) where we may imagine these demoiselles to live. The whole affair is too studied, and I turn to some cottage–window, unimaginative geraniums. . .They are facts, they appeal to me."[6]

Judging from the other contributions and Raeburn's assessment of work in progress, it would appear that many students merely paid lip service to Newbery's demands for originality. Janet Aitken's comment implied that the

term was, at best, ambiguous:

> Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as an original work or opinion; facts do not change, the lights upon them do. What is known as originality, therefore, consists in bringing a new light to bear on some fact known to all before and in the power of forcing others to regard it as such. . .
>
> No man ever yet did an original thing intentionally; your true original is always unconscious. It is the element of consciousness that often spoils the noblest work. . .Cultivate originality. It is the power to stand alone, self-poised.[7]

Aitken concluded with a plea for originality, "but not at all costs, for then it degenerates into mere singularity."[8]

Focus on the female figure was the most striking departure from the norms of traditional art periodicals: the still-lifes, traditional portraits and landscapes normally expected from the female artist were noticeably absent form the *Magazine*. A predominance of literary topics and quotations, frequently expressed in adaptations of Shakespeare and fairy tales with accompanying illustrations, facilitated this emphasis: most female figures were heroines or princesses, constructed and clothed in appropriate fashion.[9]

Written commentary, with the exception of the seven original fairy tales submitted, was occasionally polemical, as in the case of Jessie Keppie's "On the Alleged Obscenity of Browning's Poems" and one anonymous writer's essay on "Is the Modern Stage Elevating?" dealt with the relative merits of Shakespeare and Emerson.[10] The remaining literary contributions consisted of three transcriptions from Elliott's love poems, several original poems — also romantic in nature — and a number of quotations or proverbs, often without recognition of authorship or further commentary.[11] The vogue for quotations was widespread amongst female art students in Britain. As a Report to the Schools Inquiry Commission pointed out, English literature

> "occupies a more prominent position in the education of girls than boys. In most ladies' schools admired passages from standard authors, and especially poetical extracts, are committed to memory. . ."[12]

The strong literary content of the *Magazine* was therefore one reflection of women's control over its contents. Another was the predominance of female subject matter in the absence of classical subjects, still life and landscape. Instead, fairy tale and romantic themes prevailed.

In all, the four issues of the *Magazine* contained approximately sixty drawings and paintings contributed by thirteen female and four male students.[13] The female figure is central in most of these, and although several other women portrayed the female nude (often as part of a design), the images and text of the *Magazine* verify that the Macdonald sisters were the only women artists who took extraordinary liberties with the female form. Unfortunately, neither Margaret nor Frances committed any of their ideas or thoughts to written words in this or any other publication during the period.

The majority of female figures in the *Magazine* were allegorical; specifically personifications of the seasons. Many were intended as book covers, or Ex Libris (obviously in reflection of the GSA's focus on design) and others were placed as prefaces. Significantly, Patrick Geddes' *Evergreen, a Northern Seasonal* which originated in Edinburgh in 1895, produced similar almanacs in keeping with its focus on the changing seasons. Its contents included a similar arrangement of poems, fiction and topical essays ornamented by head and tailpieces, along with woodblock prints by principal artists Robert Burns and Charles H. Mackie. Unlike the *Magazine*, however, it maintained a consistent thematic reference to the seasons in both articles and visuals, arguing for the revival of Celtic tradition in design and literature.[14] Unlike

radical journals such as *Yellow Book*, the *Dial* and *Scottish Art Review* which arose in opposition to the conservatism of the Academy, *Evergreen* was an outgrowth of a Celtic spirit specific to Northern Scotland. Geddes' comment on the objectives and ultimate accomplishments of *Evergreen* is evidence that there were some loose parallels between it and the *Magazine*:

> Be it good or bad, frankly experimental at least it has been, from cover to cover. As in the semi–collegiate group amid which it arises, there has been no central authority, still less constraint; without individual or continuous editorship, its artists and writers have been each a law unto themselves.[15]

One source alleges that the closest parallel between the work of the Macdonald sisters (specifically Frances' *A Pond* and Margaret's *November 5th*) and Mackintosh's *Tree of Influence* (c. 1895, contained in the *Magazine*), is in the short–lived Scottish review of Patrick Geddes and William Sharp–Fiona Macleod, the *Evergreen*. Whatever the details or intended mood, the source contends, the 'Four' intended their work to be informed by a general sense of growth and renewal.[16] The character of *Evergreen* emphasizes nature and the seasons, birth, flowering, harvest and death. In this respect it may be seen as the precise literary equivalent to the Macdonald sisters' imagery; but it could not have been the impetus for the organic element in their work since this symbolism was already in evidence by 1893.

It is also important to note that this Celtic Revival played a vital role in the evolution of Edinburgh's Symbolist artists. Robert Burns' *Natura Naturans* from 1891 and John Duncan's *Anima Celtica* (both published in the Spring, 1895 issue of *Evergreen*) are examples of a symbolist style in embryonic form; subsequently developed by artists such as George Davidson. In particular Davidson's concentrated use of the decorative motif (a form of

loose Celtic knotwork) and very unorthodox colouring in *Abstract* and *Envy* (1898)[17] may be distant cousins of the spooks engendered by the Macdonald sisters. Davidson's creature is green–skinned with green eyes and bright red pupils from which bad dreams, in the form of Art Nouveau tendrils, explode into gadroon–shaped blossoms of orange, lilac and blue.[18] It is also possible that Mackintosh's botanically derived forms may have had some impact on the peculiar biological mysticism which dominates the articles in *Evergreen*.[19]

The GSA students contributing to the *Magazine* generally did not explore this type of biological mysticism; however they did emphasize the seasons, possibly as a reflection of the ongoing Celtic revival. They may also have drawn from another source such as the series of illustrated "Poems and Pictures" contained in the 1893 issues of the *Magazine of Art*. Written and drawn by Algernon Charles Swinburne and W.E.F. Britten respectively, these were produced monthly as "Carols of the Year." November's image is a desolate young woman clothed and hooded in medieval garb and primly perched in a classical portico, accompanied by the following verse:

> *Hail, soft November, though thy pale*
> *Sad smile rebuke the words that hail*
> *Thy sorrow with no sorrowing words*
> *Or gratulate thy grief with song*
> *Less bitter than the winds that wrong*
> *Thy withering woodlands, where the birds*
> *Keep hardly heart to sing or see*
> *How fair thy faint wan face may be.*[20]

Margaret Macdonald contributed her own version entitled *November 5th* (the date of her birthday) to the Autumn, 1894 issue of the *Magazine* (Fig. 8). It is undoubtedly a reflective self–portrait which recalls Raeburn's description of an earlier stained glass design by Frances.[21] Margaret's combination of violets and blues and the vertically elongated format of the

composition reinforce a sense of gloom. The apparent melancholy of the central woman (Margaret) is exaggerated by the narrowed oval of her face and again by the highly stylized and lengthened triangular shapes of her eyes. The two identical nude females are particularly elongated, the lower portion of their bodies dissipating into thin, tubular shapes. As in Margaret's preceding *Path of Life*, the arms, hands and necks of the flanking figures are exaggerated, and their hair echoes the vertical movement and patterning of trears. None of the symbolic language of *Summer* is evident, nor does Margaret seek to personify a particular month in the more traditional way, since she titled the work *November 5th*. Instead she has conveyed, through the technical means described, a psychological state of mind or mood relative to the dreariness of November.

The peculiarity of this work lies in Margaret's choice of the unadorned nude, since all of the usual trappings which would normally define context are absent. If she has chosen this subject as evidence of her right or freedom to do (which also signifies the rather unique circumstance of a female art student having access to the nude) she has taken a second or additional liberty by willfully desecrating the hallowed notions pertaining to that form.

Margaret and Frances exploited these liberties in such similar manner that distinguishing between the sisters' works is often difficult. This is most evident in their designs for book covers and GSA Club "At Home" Invitations from 1893 which were the precursors of Frances' Ex Libris for the first issue of the *Magazine*. All of these designs share the symmetrical format and duplicated figural distortions of *November 5th*, but most of the female figures are partially draped, perhaps because of their intended use as graphics for public consumption.

Taken in sequence, Frances' set of three graphic designs (Fig. 9, 10 and 11) appear to be variations on a recurring theme. It is suggested that this series would have originated with the Glasgow School of Art Club Music Program (Fig. 10) produced for an "At Home" event of November 25, 1893. Two curled female figures clad in short, revealing tunics hold stylized musical instruments fashioned to complete the circular motion created by their hair. The central apple tree to which they are tied imbues the design with religious symbolism.

The meaning of the tree is more fully developed in Frances' Ex Libris for the *Magazine* (Fig. 9), in which Eve is inextricably connected with the tree form. Her elongated torso forms the core and the suspended apples affirm the association with her Biblical counterpart, wings and halo notwithstanding.[22] Frances has maintained the circular format which encloses the two lower figures, this time by extending their hair into an almost complete sphere. The scrolls probably refer to the intended use of this design.

Margaret's invitation card for the same "At Home" of November 25, 1893 (Fig. 12) incorporates very similar imagery and forms, again employing the same flowing, symmetrical format that is present in all of the graphic designs of the Macdonald sisters. The flanking female figures are also mirror-imaged but they are free of bondage with the exception of their hair, which becomes part of the curvilinear tendrils emanating from the central figure's wings. They, like the central figure, are fully clothed in garments resembling the Egyptian or Byzantine dress in Frances' *Ascension* and *Crucifixion*.

The two females in Frances' Ex Libris for Thomas Wilson (Fig. 11), which incorporates a portion of the Arab proverb from the April 1894 *Magazine*, appear to have the same prototype.[23] They are partially clothed;

their breasts, arms and hands considerably elongated in contrast to the flattened crescent-shape of their hair, which binds them together. At first glance one assumes three major entities in the design: the two women and a stylized tree form. In fact its simplicity is somewhat deceptive, since on closer examination the upper torsos and hair create the shape and impression of an apple (in cross-section) contained within the tree. The women's skeletal arms, lowered heads and the central form against which their foreheads are placed enhance the suggestion of an apple's core. Within that framework, the two women are engaged in some type of ceremony or ritual which suggests an obscure reference to the iconographic apple tree and Eve.

In comparing these graphic works with Mackintosh's design for the "At Home" of the previous year (Fig. 15), it would be difficult to conclude that the Macdonald sisters borrowed more than the symmetrical format and incorporation of two female (but not mirror-imaged) figures. Despite the thistle leaves, Mackintosh's design is not unlike the typical art-student submissions he was then producing, in Renaissance style, for competitions. His massive, barely feminine figures, firmly ensconced in an ornately classical architecture, are in fact the Delphic and Erythraean Sibyls from Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling.[24] The aphorism "There is Hope in Honest Error, None in the Icy Perfection of the Mere Stylist" was subsequently used by Mackintosh primarily in conjunction with his architectural philosophies, but in this instance it would appear to suggest the GSA students' drive for experimentation and originality.[25]

A more plausible source for the Macdonald sisters' "At Home" series appeared three months earlier in the *Studio*. The format and tree symbol of this series are too remarkably similar to a design by C.F.A. Voysey (Fig. 16)

to be considered coincidental.[26] The parallel in these designs is the symmetrical composition in which Voysey places a tree framed by similarly curled figures enclosed within circular spaces. Voysey's figures, however, are fully clothed males of vaguely exotic origin, whose form and position facilitate the design structure. The introduction of human figures into design was uncommon, at least in the prevailing Arts and Crafts Movement. When questioned on this point, Voysey stressed that the artist should not be restricted to the usual foliage and ornamental motifs: birds or human figures were acceptable provided they were sufficiently conventionalized and reduced to mere symbols.[27] In fact all of the components of Voysey's design are chosen, conventionalized and positioned purely for design aesthetics:

> To go to Nature is, of course, to approach the fountain-head, but a literal transcript will not result in good ornament; before a living plant a man must go through an elaborate process of selection and analysis, and think of the balance, repetition, and many other qualities of his design, thereby calling his individual taste into play and adding a human interest to his work. If he does this, although he has gone directly to Nature, his work will not resemble any of his predecessors he has become an inventor.[28]

The Macdonald sisters' appropriation of Voysey's ideas, or at least his format, includes conventionalization, balance, incorporation of stylized human figures, and some degree of repetition. Following typical Arts and Crafts preferences, the forms of the Macdonald sisters are flattened and presented in outline. Their deviation from Arts and Crafts norms primarily consists of the extent to which they carried the conventionalization of their figures; in effect, distortion to the point of emaciation. The treatment of writhing tube-like tendrils which emanate from and connect the forms also departed from the standard flowers and foliage. This type of sinuous vegetation and their

specifically female forms more closely resemble Art Nouveau characteristics.[29] The *Studio's* illustration of Voysey's wallpaper design was not the only visual source for the Macdonald sisters' imagery. Jan Toorop's *The Three Brides* (Fig. 17) also appeared in the August, 1893 issue of the *Studio* and was promptly pronounced "the everlasting and universal antithesis of grace and disgrace, of the pure and the impure."[30] Toorop's work had not been published previously in British periodicals, although he, along with other members of the Symbolist group Les XX, had been mentioned briefly in the pages of the *Magazine of Art* without accompanying illustrations. Toorop's ethereal, floating women share the elongated profile of the Macdonald sisters' figures. In particular the dramatic angles at which their outstretched arms are positioned, and the flowing ribbons of hair which represent the most powerful linear element of this intertwining design, appear to have been prototypes for the female figures of the Macdonald sisters. The writer of the accompanying article, who was sympathetic to British conventions which scrupulously respected "the Young Person" as reader, ventured that

> Herr Toorop's idea was to contrast the Bride of Christ — *i.e* the Church — with that Egyptian-featured person with the necklace of human skulls, whose position in life I will leave you to guess; while the third Bride, the maid who seems to triumph, is the type of guilelessness, innocence, lowliness, humility; in a word, she is the Bride of what is most divine in human hopes and thoughts and inspiration."[31]

The Macdonald sisters' related version of Eve (aside from formal affiliations) is an interesting parallel to Toorop's religious symbolism. One could conceivably make the argument that the story of Eve is being subversively rewritten by them, particularly since Margaret was not particularly religious.[32] Given the more sober treatment afforded their subsequent commissioned works with a

religious theme (for example, the series of Illuminations which illustrate *The Christmas Story*, of c. 1895–96) it seems likely that in these early graphic designs the Macdonald sisters chose a common theme, manipulated it to achieve a new or original slant and arrived at the highly unorthodox figural treatment as an expression — not unlike Toorop's — of their individuality.[33]

The influence of Voysey and Toorop through the vehicle of the *Studio* is generally acknowledged by most sources. In 1933 Jessie Newbery (wife of GSA Headmaster Francis Newbery) wrote that for Mackintosh the earliest of several epoch–making events in his life occurred when he was a student at the GSA:

> This was contact, through the medium of the *Studio*, with the work of the following artists: Aubrey Beardsley (his illustrations to the play "Salome" by Oscar Wilde); illustrations to Zola's *Le Reve* by Carlos Schwabe; reproductions of some pictures and the decorative work of C.F.A. Voysey. These artists gave an impetus and a direction to the work of "the Four."[34]

The connections between Toorop's *The Three Brides* and the Macdonald sisters' graphic designs is particularly evident in the female figures, even to the extent that the Macdonald sisters retained the religious symbolism. However, in Mackintosh's work Toorop's influence is more restricted to the overall linear construction and perpetual flow of line. Because of its rectilinear angles and structure, Mackintosh's design reflects an architectural bias and a stylization which applies more to the botanical than the human forms; probably in defiance of the characteristic curvilinear format of Art Nouveau designs. The same affiliations can be found in Mackintosh's Design for a Diploma (Fig. 18). Of the three female figures, the gender of the central figure is the most ambiguous, particularly since her hair has the same flattened shape and treatment as the abstract and purely linear portions of the design. Aside from

their partially obscured breasts, stylized hair (also incorporated into other linear elements) and some slenderization, the two flanking figures are neither distorted nor shocking — their shape and placement essentially facilitate or complement the formal, linearized composition.

Mackintosh's female figures never achieve the degree of distortion in those by Margaret and Frances. The nude or partially clad women in his Diploma design have the same androgynous qualities as his *Descent of Night* (Fig. 19), from the April, 1894 issue of the *Magazine*.[35] Although this figure has the same stylized wings of the clothed figure in Mackintosh's *Harvest Moon*, her slightly disproportionate lower limbs and elongated body, echoed by the vertical lines of the upper portion of this painting, are somewhat asexual. Her hair, like her wings, is a solid weighty mass which becomes part of the vertical structure of the composition. Mackintosh's acidic green coloring, of equal intensity to Margaret's in *Summer*, seems a somewhat odd choice for the theme.[36]

Mackintosh's final two cover designs for the *Magazine* are even less distorted, though they are again conventionalized. *Spring* (Fig. 20) is personified by two languishing, voluptuous females who appear to be awakening from a deep underground sleep amidst opening bulbs and flowers. *Winter's* two sleeping figures (Fig. 21) are awkwardly positioned under a heavy weight of hair which appears, because of the lack of definition in the women's bodies, to be the principle means of conveying their sexuality.[37]

Mackintosh's cover design for *Spring*, like Frances' *Eve*, was also inscribed with Lucy Raeburn's name; however it was pre-empted by a cover design executed by another student, Agnes Raeburn. A comparison of the cover designs and graphics of Mackintosh, Raeburn and the Macdonald sisters

is particularly instructive, since it reveals one of the purely technical reasons for the negative reaction to Margaret and Frances' work. Agnes Raeburn's frontispiece entitled *April Number, 1894* (Fig. 22) employs the same popular symmetrical composition with mirrored female figures as the Macdonald sisters and Mackintosh. Generally speaking, a symmetrical format carries less tension, since the eye follows an almost soothing, perpetually flowing movement. In this type of composition there are no awkward or jarring negative spaces; instead the viewer is assured a sense of balance and continuity.[38] Raeburn enhances this fluidity through several devices, including a gently flowing line and delicate, muted coloring. Even more significantly, the figures are relatively standard portrayals of the feminine figure; languid, graceful and elegant without anatomical distortion. Their clothing is almost shapeless — conservative dress which bears minimal reference to any particular fashion or style. The figures turn away from each other, positioned in a dance–like movement as they bestow the essential April showers (rain) from a symbolic cup. There are no iconographical or structural connections between the womens' hair (which remains neatly knotted) and any of the organic elements such as plant growth or flowing water. Raeburn's work is clearly more traditional in conception than that of the Macdonald sisters.

As it has been noted, Frances and Margaret frequently incorporate the hair of their figures into the design, which often gives the appearance of painfully forcing their heads backwards, elongating their necks, or intensifying the thrust of their jaws. Similarly, both sisters juxtapose the severely angularized appendages of the women with the more curvilinear organic elements of the design. By magnifying such tensions of figural distortion, the viewer is denied the sense of order normally associated with symmetrical

compositions.

Agnes Raeburn's drawing is typical of the kind of work contributed by most of the other female students, several of whom incorporated the female nude in their designs. Raeburn's other, more daring frontispiece design for the *Magazine* (*Winged Woman*, Fig. 23) consists of a frontal, somewhat bound female nude. This more conventional female body provides further evidence of the gulf between the Macdonald sisters' notion of "original" and the interpretation of that term by their contemporaries.

This point is made even more clear by considering again the most radical in the Macdonald sisters' series of graphic designs entitled *A Pond* (Fig. 24). Frances' mirrored female figures are now confrontational; their aggression exaggerated and echoed by the overhead contest between the menacing pod or tadpole forms. A comparison between *A Pond* and the two previously discussed designs by Mackintosh and Raeburn illustrates the degree to which Frances' figures have become caricatures. Given the symbolic references to Nature in the all of these works, it is worth considering whether Frances intended a deliberate parody of the others' conventional treatment of the seasons through allegory. Her figures, like those in Mackintosh's *Spring*, are positioned below ground; but in this case they are the antithesis of the sensuous sleepers. Since the bulbous or tad-pole shapes are continually reinforced, these figures seem to represent grimacing underwater or marine life in a burlesqued version of the classic "wet" drapery. In essence, Frances has isolated and personified the standard symbolic elements (such as vegetation) normally employed as accoutrement. In contrast to the airy Spring foliage by Raeburn and the awakening bud forms in Mackintosh's design, Frances' bulb forms are decidedly malevolent, a trait which is compounded through

duplication.

While multiplicity of figures in this and most of the other early designs of the Macdonald sisters facilitated the dicta of symmetrical compositions it may also have held other implications. In light of the heated controversies which surrounded the nude, it is worth considering whether multiple nudes — particularly if they were stripped of mythological or allegorical connotations — could have been perceived by the 19th century spectator as references to lesbianism. In this regard, one of the most perplexing drawings in the *Magazine* (Fig. 26) appears to represent some type of social comment, but its meaning remains ambiguous. Situated in the April, 1894 issue of the *Magazine* this drawing is not accompanied by title, indication of authorship or explanation, nor does it relate to any of the preceding or succeeding articles. The two nude female figures comprise part of the design of an initial letter which closely resembles Celtic manuscript illumination.[39] The interlacing serpent would appear to be a reference to the temptation of Adam and Eve, with a simple "No" censuring the obvious sexual relationship of the two women. The lettering of this image is ambiguous, and may also be construed as "END"; however it appears on page 39 of the 45-page volume. Furthermore, the gestures and nudity of the two figures would have had little significance to the purpose of a tailpiece, if this was its intended function. There are no other similar types of drawings, essays or poems in this or other issues of the *Magazine*.

Given the possible meanings of this drawing, it seems safe to conclude that Newbery's students worked in an uninhibited artistic environment where they were free to interpret and portray the nude in an unconventional manner. This degree of artistic freedom was unprecedented amongst female art students,

especially when it came to the difficult business of choosing the nude as subject. The *Art Journal* addressed the particular issue of multiple nudes in its critique of Henrietta (Rae) Normand, but did not elaborate:

> That Mrs. Normand should succeed as well as she does in her studies of the nude, is brave demonstration that women's gifts are little more limited than man's. But even Mrs. Normand we prefer when she is dealing with the draped figure. . .If we must have the ladies paint the nude, let them be single figures. Her touch is nice, and colour sweet; but when she comes to such a subject as "Apollo and Daphne" she very nearly breaks down.[40]

In addition to the problem of multiple nudes (even if they remain statically separated in the composition), the Macdonald sisters' images were also provocative in that their nudes were not "clothed" in respectable mythological or classical themes, nor were they camouflaged by exoticism. Such devices were the usual means of efficiently removing the nude from contemporary life and emptying it of its political, social and cultural associations. For example, Delacroix, Ingres and Renoir were among those who sometimes placed their nude or partially clad female figures in oriental trappings as unmasked references to the harem. The figures produced by Frances and Margaret are clearly a rejection of these academic prototypes. In fact the Macdonald sisters' figures are as deviantly anti-academic and defiantly "modern" as the fin-de-siecle women created by another alleged influence, Aubrey Beardsley. As Jessie Newbery noted, his drawings for Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (Fig. 27) had specific impact in the development of the Glasgow Four. In its first issue, the *Studio* published this along with seven illustrations in Beardsley's distinctive black and white style.[41] *Studio* writer Joseph Pennell referred to Beardsley as "an artist whose work is quite as remarkable in its execution as in its invention: a very rare combination." Pennell's real concern

with this new artist was the possibility that Beardsley might be over-appreciated and too enthusiastically endorsed.[42] At that point Beardsley had produced a comparatively small amount of work; yet he had, in the opinion of Pennell, managed to appeal to artists, ". . .and what more could he wish?"[43] According to Pennell, Beardsley's sources were eclectic: they included Japanese designs, 15th century manuscripts, Burne-Jones and Rossetti, none of which overwhelmed his work. In short, Beardsley fully recognized his place in time and availed himself of the opportunities afforded him.

Perhaps the Macdonald sisters were also searching for a nonconformist, contemporary style and therefore avoided the temptation to appropriate Beardsley's unique graphic manner. This would explain the frustrations of critics from the 1890's as well as subsequent writers in attempting to identify a definite visual source. Margaret and Frances appear to have adopted only minor, formal elements of Beardsley's design and blended these, along with other sources (Toorop and Voysey) in their early work.[44]

A point might be made for the incorporation of Beardsley's sinuous, flowing line, but this curvilinear element was also present in a series of illustrations for title-page awards contained in the August, 1893 issue of the *Studio* — the same issue in which Toorop's *Three Brides* was published. Some of these suggest a Japanese influence and others are reminiscent of Selwyn Image's design for the Century Guild's *Hobby Horse*. None, however, (including Beardsley's) anatomically distort or reveal the female figure to the extent of the Macdonald sisters' designs.[45] Furthermore, the emphatically symmetrical style and the mirror imaging of figures which characterizes the majority of works by the Macdonald sisters is not found elsewhere in the *Studio*. Beardsley's compositions are invariably asymmetrical which along with

the uneven juxtaposition of positive and negative (white and black) space and the sinister qualities of his figures all contribute to the decadent quality of his work.[46] By contrast, Frances and Margaret frequently employ watercolor — specifically acidic greens offset by violets and sapphires — and avoid the ambiguous positive and negative spaces common to Beardsley's compositions.

There are also no indications that they worked in a specifically "black and white" style despite the fact that at least two of their colleagues were very much influenced by this aspect of Beardsley's work. Jessie King (1875–1949) developed her own personal illustrative language based upon delicate pen and ink drawings using various lines and dots, although her subject matter was devoid of retrospection and malevolence; and Henry Mitchell contributed his "Black and White" (Fig. 28) to the *Magazine's* Spring issue of 1895.[47] Mitchell's drawing is remarkably similar to the "good–humoured parody" of Beardsley's early work published in the *Studio* in May of 1894 (Fig. 29).[48] As the *Studio* had noted three months earlier, its introduction of Beardsley had generated considerable disciples, imitators and parodists, as evidenced by submissions to its design competitions. The *Studio* considered his style a perilous one to imitate; "only very rash or very foolish draughtsmen would attempt to do so."[49]

The *Studio* did not engage in the rapidly accelerating controversy which attached to Beardsley:

> ". . .we find the irrepressible personality of the artist dominating everything — whether the compositions do or do not illustrate the text — what may be their exact purpose or the meaning of their symbolism, is happily not necessary to consider here. Nor is it expedient to bring conventional criticism to bear upon them, for nothing in ancient or modern art is so akin that you could place it side by side for comparison."[50]

Instead it noted with relish the feast of fantastic and eerie conceptions, grotesque *diablerie*, audacity and extravagance which characterized this decadent, *fin de siècle* work; and awaited the outcome.[51]

Within a year, Beardsley had become inextricably linked with the *Yellow Book*, an English quarterly launched on April 5, 1894, by John Lane's Bodley Head Press. Initially conceived as a periodical "where Letters, where Black and White Art might enter into their own,"[52] its bright yellow cover quickly became associated with the first art-editor, Beardsley, who contributed extensively to the first four issues.

The principles of the *Yellow Book* demanded equal emphasis upon art and literature: "Certainly the writings were composed without the slightest pre-occupation concerning the work of the graphic artists, and the draughtsmen do not illustrate inventions of the scribes," declared Philip Hamerton in "A Criticism of Volume I."[53] Critical commentary was noticeably absent. Instead, the *Yellow Book* focused on creative poetry, fiction, short dramatic scenes and essays. Its literary contents were evidently intended to represent the modern English literary mind and its illustrations were to avoid condescending to popular taste.[54] As Hamerton pointed out, "the Editor and Publishers have a tendency to look to young men of ability for assistance in their enterprise"; and in this sense it had few parallels in mainstream art periodicals.

As an exception to its contemporary style, the *Yellow Book* did engage Sir Frederick Leighton, then President of the Royal Academy, who contributed a sensuous charcoal drawing of two females (one nude and the other in revealing drapery). In light of its radical nature, it is surprising that these were amongst only a handful of nude subjects in that periodical. For the

most part the majority of illustrations (aside from Beardsley's drawings) consisted of contemporary portraits and occasional landscapes.

It is interesting to note the proportion of male to female contributors in the relevant period 1890–96. In the first issue, none of the artists was female, and one of the thirteen writers was a woman. The proportion of female writers increased rapidly; and by July of 1896 five of the nine contributing artists were women (two of whom were Frances and Margaret) while seven of the sixteen writers were female. It is also significant that by 1896 the contributing artists represented regional schools such as Newlyn, Birmingham and Glasgow.[55] Margaret and Frances, along with MacNair and several of their classmates, were the principal contributors to the July issue of the *Yellow Book* from 1896.

Since the *Yellow Book* commenced circulation subsequent to the first two issues of the *Magazine* and the format and content of the latter were not significantly altered after that date, there can be no claim for a direct influence. There are parallels between these two journals, however, which include similar literary contents, the participation of women artists and writers (or more specifically acceptance of work regardless of gender), and a youthful drive for innovation.[56] In terms of influencing the Macdonald sisters, Beardsley's designs would have proven that contemporary artists could develop highly personalized styles while drawing from a range of sources. However, as previously noted, there is little evidence that the Macdonald sisters directly appropriated many of his particular stylistic tendencies. It is more probable that he functioned as a general role model.[57] The Macdonald sisters chose to be as eclectic as Beardsley, incorporating his decorative linear patterns and figural stylization with the flattened ornamental design of Voysey and the

peculiarly Javanese, or Indonesian symbolism of Toorop.[58]

In any event, critics in Glasgow found a definite connection between the radical work of the Macdonald sisters, Aubrey Beardsley, and the *Yellow Book*. Some perceived it as a libellous attack on Beardsley, "who in all his drawings shows genuine artistic elegance and correct perspective" — characteristics not seen in the Macdonald sisters' work.[59] Another declared that even Beardley's poster of *Don Juan* could be happily recalled relative to the infinitely inferior "hallucinations in colour and design" which characterized the controversial GSA exhibition of 1894.[60] To the author of "The New Woman" cited in Chapter 1, the female figures of the Macdonald sisters were the offspring of a decrepit female gorilla (evidently comparable to Beardsley's women when ravaged by decadence and the passage of time) and Caliban (Shakespeare's deformed half-human son of a devil and the witch Sycorax, and symbol of man's primitive urges). The remaining descriptives were no less castigating.[61]

Given the conservatism of Glasgow and, in terms of art, its drive for a national identity which stemmed from a long tradition of Highland chieftains, cottage interiors, peasants, landscapes and Scottish history pieces,[62] it is probable that any exhibits featuring the nude might have drawn criticism. Even if Margaret and Frances had veiled their nude figures with classical or mythological accoutrements, such compromises would not likely have escaped condemnation.[63] Nudes held little interest (or more likely were too scandalous) for the picture-buying citizens of Glasgow who demonstrated an acquired taste for the Hague and Barbizon Schools by demanding landscape, still life and genre paintings.[64]

Even the anti-establishment "Glasgow Boys" who immediately preceded the Macdonald sisters avoided depicting the nude female. Many of these

artists, if they were Paris–trained, concentrated on Impressionist versions of landscape and more contemporary portraiture with overtones of Whistler and Japanese art.[65] Their work reflected a national temperament moulded from local art, owing little to the Parisian atelier and virtually nothing to Continental artists — particularly the Symbolists.[66] The public responded to the straightforward motifs of this group by classifying them as essentially healthy, despite their departure from Victorian sentimentality and anecdote in favour of more robust subject matter.[67]

The organ of this group was the periodical *Scottish Art Review*, published in reaction to continued opposition by Edinburgh's Royal Scottish Academy. This short–lived, indigenous periodical reflected the same predominance of Impressionist landscape and genre works and its over–all format was similar to the *Magazine of Art* and the *Art Journal*. Unlike those periodicals, however, it did not ignore the dilemmas of female artists[68] and it also seriously addressed design. Reviews of Arts and Crafts Exhibitions were extensive, and generally acknowledged support for the designer or crafts–person as a bona fide artist. Instead of performing a role of tutelage, the *Scottish Art Review* tended to provide substantial space for dialectic commentary and included greater coverage of students' work than the *Magazine of Art* and the *Art Journal*.[69] One particularly scathing review of the quality of students' work in South Kensington reflects the anti–establishment nature of this periodical and the generic quality of work associated with South Kensington as a whole:

> It is evident enough that the students, as a body, are in bondage to old traditions, wherein neatness and prettiness are held to be the chief factors in design. No words could be too strong to condemn this fatal heresy.
>
> It may be that the sickness is not one affecting the constitution of the body, but that the low pulse of the patient is caused by too

> tightly–tied red tape, meagre, or over–rich nourishment, want of interest in contemporary taste, or other extraneous accidents; but whatever be the diagnosis, the most unlearned can see that syncope is imminent unless timely restoratives by applied.[70]

Of the approximate 140,000 works submitted to the National Competitions in 1889, "hardly a dozen betrayed any original feeling for harmony of colour, novelty in composition, or new conventional treatment of natural forms."[71] Drawings from the life appeared to have been mere technical achievements of rude unselected facts:

> In the whole class there is a lack of nobility and power, all the studies are so unmistakably merely naked models, not masterly presentations of the real beauty of the undraped form.[72]

Approximately six years later, when Margaret and Frances graduated from the GSA, the author of this attack wrote an extensive review of the 1896 London Arts & Crafts Exhibition entries. In it, women were given equal coverage without specific reference to gender and the limitations frequently associated with it. "The Misses Macdonald", who showed so much novelty and sense of fine decoration in their works that a tendency to eccentricity was pardonable, were singled out for their "weird travesties of humanity. . ghostly long–drawn figures, with pained faces and sadness passing words."[73]

The writer was Gleeson White, who had also contributed his literary talent and design expertise to the *Artist* (1880–1902), then an unillustrated and modest version of the *Art Journal*.[74] White was both intrigued and perplexed by these radical designs, but maintained the objective attitude which characterized the *Studio's* articles:

> No doubt in Glasgow there is a Rosetta stone, which makes clear the tangled meaning of these designs; but it would be hazardous for the

> average person to suggest their interpretation. One thing however is clear, that in their own way, unmoved by ridicule, or misconception, the Glasgow students have thought out a very fascinating scheme to puzzle, surprise, and please. . .
>
> Probably nothing in the gallery has provoked more decided censure than these various exhibits; and that fact alone should cause a thoughtful observer of art to pause before he joins the opponents. If the said artists do not come very prominently forward as leaders of a school of design peculiarly their own, we shall be much mistaken. The probability would seem to be, that those who laugh at them to-day will be eager to eulogize them a few years hence.[75]

White implied that censure of the Macdonald sisters' work was not limited to the objections expressed by the Glasgow public through the local press. In fact, despite considerable modification of the female form in subsequent designs (the most notable of which was a fullness and luxuriant texture facilitated by the gesso technique particularly favored by Margaret) the "School of Spook" label stubbornly clung to their work. In London the reaction of the establishment to their entries at the Arts & Crafts Exhibition caused sufficient furor to warrant a special investigation. Gleeson White, then the editor of the *Studio*, undertook the task by travelling to Glasgow to personally meet the artists who had obviously piqued his curiosity.

White's ensuing articles entitled "Some Glasgow Designers and Their Work" formed a three-part series contained in the July and August issues of 1897; and these constitute the most revealing accounts of the Macdonald sisters to date. One of his comments reinforces the suggestion by the Glasgow author of "The New Woman" that the Macdonald sisters were one and the same as the New or Wild Women associated with spinsterhood and various other social and political deviants:

> There is a legend of a critic from foreign parts who was amusing himself by deducing the personality of the Misses Macdonald from their works, and describing them, as he imagined them, "middle-aged sisters,

> flat-footed, with projecting teeth and long past the hope (which in them was always forlorn) of matrimony, gaunt, unlovely females." At this moment two laughing, comely girls, scarce out of their teens, entered and were formally presented to him as the true and only begetters of the works that had provoked him. It was a truly awful moment for the unfortunate visitor, whose evolution of the artists from his inner consciousness had for once proved so treacherous.[76]

Stereotypical descriptions of the "New Woman" matched those used by such nineteenth century writers as the notorious anti-feminist E. Lynn Linton who, in articles entitled "Wild Women as Politicians", and "Wild Women as Social Insurgents" commented on their curious inversion of sex (mind or body) which was tantamount to the disagreeable "bearded chin, the bass voice, flat chest, and lean hips of a woman who has physically failed in her rightful development."[77]

Linton claimed that the embarrassing compulsion of the "wild woman" to publicly exhibit her artistic "gift" at art refuges for those of mediocre talent fueled the vagrant, self-advertising spirit of the day:

> The love of art for its own sake, of intellectual work for the intellectual pleasure it brings, knows nothing of this insatiate vanity, this restless ambition to be classed among those who give to their work days where these others give hours. It is only the Wild Women who take these headers into artistic depths, where they flounder pitiably, neither dredging up unknown treasures, nor floating gaily in the sun on the crest of the wave.[78]

Aggressive, disturbing, officious, unquiet, rebellious to authority and tyrannous to those whom they can subdue, these women, Linton declared, were "about the most unlovely specimens the sex has yet produced. . ."[79] Linton's attitude towards female artists is only slightly exaggerated from that of the *Magazine of Art* and *Art Journal*. His descriptions are probably closer to the interpretation of the "New Woman" by the Glasgow public, who equated the

Macdonald sisters with the early feminists and suffragettes.[80]

The *Studio* completely refrained from this kind of gender bias; and this impartiality towards all artists as well as art students was instrumental in establishing it as a credible source for the Macdonald sisters and their contemporaries. In fact, from its inception the *Studio* seems to have pointedly omitted specific references to or categorizations of "lady" artists.[81] Unlike the mainstream periodicals, portrayals of nude or partially draped females by both male and female artists were plentiful in paintings, book designs and photography. In its attempts to upgrade the status of design, the *Studio* also devoted special attention to the annual exhibition of works submitted for South Kensington's National Competitions, and regularly featured its own competitions for bookcovers. Unlike the *Magazine of Art* and the *Art Journal*, it tended to avoid the laborious "How to do it" essays of these other publications, and instead concentrated on illustrating and critiquing submitted work.[82]

Illustrations in the *Studio* were prolific: in 1893 virtually every one of its 254 pages contained a high quality visual image in keeping with its conviction that applied arts, so often relegated to a different and inferior category, must be recognized and respected in order to maintain the progress of art. This inter–relationship between the fine and applied arts and the infusion of international content assured its success and longevity.[83]

The impact of the *Studio* on the Macdonald sisters and their colleagues was both dramatic and long term: it not only provided the visual source material to create a link with the Continental symbolist style, but also featured most of the students who had participated in the founding of the *Magazine*.[84] As an important source on the early work of the Macdonald

sisters, the *Studio* offers the most comprehensive (if brief) insight into the evolution of their images of women from their embryonic stages in the 1893–95 period. More significantly — since they had previously remained silent in the pages of the *Magazine* and no other written documents by them exist — the several articles in the *Studio* reveal the spirit in which these works were undertaken.[85]

Gleeson White, like several other critics, had particular interest in revealing the visual prototypes for their strange images of women. Disclaiming the usual English precedents, the Macdonald sisters demurely denied they were influenced by Egyptian and other art forms. "We have no basis", they told White with delightful innocence, "that is the worst of it." Evidently they were extremely amused by White's discomfort on realizing that the intensity of their work was not the product of equally intense (or flat-footed and unlovely) female artists.[86] White's article suggests that the sisters were expressing their sense of beauty in conjunction with their own feelings towards arrangement of lines and masses. "Why conventionalise the human figure", a critic had asked, to which they replied, "Why not? . . . Certain conventional distortions, harpies, mermaids, caryatides, and the rest are accepted, why should not a worker to-day make patterns out of people if he pleases?"[87]

Ultimately Gleeson White was forced to conclude that the Macdonald School, or the "Mac group," as he also referred to the Macdonald sisters and their future husbands, was truly without precedent. He also noted the benefits of Newbery's support and encouragement coupled with the lively, inquisitive environment of the GSA.[88] "If you once throw over precedent," White pointed out, "there need be no limit to experiment," and the Macdonald sisters had clearly availed themselves of the uncommon opportunity to do so.[89]

The fact that they deflected the resulting attacks with humour is evidence of their confidence and free spirit: they were, after all, two of "The Immortals."[90]

Most of these "Immortals" were also members of the small but elite group of female students who, upon graduating from the GSA, became some of the better known and respected women artists of Scotland in the early 20th century. Their self-confidence and collective energies had manifested in the launching of their own distinctive periodical — proof of their freedom to write and illustrate whatever they chose. Although the *Magazine* (which was never published — its single copies were handwritten) may not have found its way to many people outside Glasgow, or substantially affected other artistic developments, the driving forces behind it may have significantly affected another women's group. Six years later, a very optimistic magazine emerged as an alternative to the frivolous, fashion-oriented magazines which comprised the majority of periodicals available to women. The reasons behind the foundation of the *Lady's Review of Reviews* were remarkably parallel to the implied purpose of the *Magazine*:

> "Scottish women are not behind any more than Scottish men in everything that pertains to forward movements, and we think that the time has come for a country which has its own social customs, its own law, and even its own religion, to have its own Ladies' Magazine. We would be sorry to see the time arrive when everything will be done from London. . ."[91]

The *Lady's Review of Reviews*, the first issue of which appeared in April of 1901, was an independent, non-party publication aimed at the new educated and enquiring women. Its intent was clear: "We particularly appeal to Ladies throughout Scotland . . . to push THEIR OWN MAGAZINE." The contents of its first issue included articles on "Women and Social Progress in

the 19th Century," Russian women, "Woman's Work in Scotland," "Our Scottish Lady Lawyer," "Ladies of the Stage," the emigration of women, and a synopsis of the contents of other Ladies magazines, which the *Lady's Review of Reviews* resembled in format only. Its sole fashion article was entitled "Veils — A Menace to Health."[92]

Despite the five year time lapse between the *Magazine* and the *Lady's Review of Reviews*, a connection between these two periodicals is not improbable. As previously noted, the Glasgow School of Art provided a fruitful atmosphere for the suffrage cause: Ann Macbeth (classmate of the Macdonald sisters and later head of the Embroidery Department) was listed as one of many suffrage banner-makers; and Jessie Newbery (the Headmaster's wife) was particularly active in organization of the Art and Curio Stall at the Grand Suffrage Bazaar in 1910. The spirit of the Women's Social and Political Union was very much in the air during the 1890's, to the extent that female GSA students were designing, sewing and embroidering their own "Aesthetic Dress" in the purple, green and buff colors which comprised the official scheme of the women's suffrage movement.[93]

That same sense of spirited agitation or revolt characterized the early work of the Macdonald sisters and, to some degree, the designs by other female students. Perhaps this is best expressed in the words of one of their colleagues who (sounding very much like Lucy Raeburn) identified herself only as "Our own Weird One":

> "To be weird, to be quaint, to be *outre*, to be absurd (in the common estimate) is not so easy as one would think, but we achieve it in the poster. Our artistic creed is: (1) The public must be knocked. (2) Knock them honestly if possible — but anyhow knock them. (3) It is better to be *bisarre* than to be beautiful. . ."[94]

In Britain, Gleeson White's rather exceptional understanding of the Macdonald sisters' work provided a sharp contrast to the more typical assaults by the press and public. In fact the *Studio* (and later the *Yellow Book*) were the only publications which did not represent the kind of forces against which the Macdonald sisters and some of their contemporaries reacted. The severity of these assaults points to the extremity of their departure from the usual conventions of the British art world and the degree to which they resembled international or continental movements. Alternatively perceived as Art Nouveau artists, Symbolists or Decadants, the Macdonald sisters were artists whose work, though overlooked in subsequent years, obviously represented a radical new art form with sufficient impetus to challenge the British art establishment. Charles Ashbee's rhyme is a revealing testimony to the fact:

> *"I'm in the fashion — non controversial,*
> *And the fashion is nothing — if not commercial,*
> *Pre-Raphaelite once, with a tiny twist*
> *Of the philosophical hedonist,*
> *Inspired by Whistler — next a touch,*
> *Of the "Arts and Crafts" but not too much.*
> *Then Impressionism, the daintiest fluke;*
> *Then the German Squirm, and the Glasgow Spook,*
> *A spice of the latest French erotic,*
> *Anything new and Studiotic. . ."*[95]

## CONCLUSION

This enquiry began as an exploration of the early figurative designs of the Macdonald sisters and the catalysts which led to their radical departure from all of the prevailing Academic, Arts & Crafts and Aesthetic conventions.

The status of the Macdonald sisters during the relevant period 1890–94 was fundamental to the development of these images. As art students, they would not at any subsequent point in their careers have the same freedom to indulge in this degree of experimentation without being compromised by restrictions of patronage and commissions. Their student status would have been quite different, however, had they enrolled at a more typical art institution such as the Academy or one of the many Schools of Design. The Glasgow School of Art, under the enlightened leadership of Francis Newbery, instilled very specific values which demanded originality and individualism. It also facilitated every form of experimentation by providing, among other things, access to the nude model for female as well as male students. This did not constitute a special privilege but was an unquestionable right commonly denied most female art students at other institutions. This access was critical to the Macdonald sisters' designs; and in eagerly availing themselves of this opportunity Margaret and Frances were also expressing their resistance to the dictates of the Academy. As one source points out, denial or provision of the nude model had significant impact on the artist's right of self–expression:

> Control over access to the nude was instrumental in the exercise of power over what meanings were constructed by an art based upon an ideal of the human body. Official exclusion from life classes ensured that women had no means to determine the language of high art or to make their own representations of the world, and thus resist and contest the hegemony of the dominant class or gender.[1]

The Macdonald sisters' emphatic refusal to be relegated to the inferior status of still life, landscape or genre artist reiterated Newbery's views that women were equal to and should work side by side with male artists.

In sharp contrast to Newbery's programme of supporting female students and emphasizing the importance of design, the Academy nurtured a strong gender bias towards art students and professional artists which relegated female artists to inferior roles and emphasized a more traditional fine arts training. Mainstream periodicals such as the *Art Journal* and the *Magazine of Art* were valuable instruments which the Academy used to enforce and maintain that hegemony. The function of these periodicals included fostering and protecting all "good art" — in the same way that the Academy was custodian — of the social and financial interests of (male) easel painters.[2] More specifically, these periodicals claimed the right to define "ideal beauty" and to determine which artists were eligible to approach this hallowed subject. Their ultimate failure to mirror the whole spectrum of the contemporary arts scene is demonstrated by articles which either avoided or else demonstrated an intolerance for "foreign" art. This was tantamount to a newspaper suppressing news; hence they incurred the cost of declining rank and authority.[3]

The Macdonald sisters reacted against the ideologies of these mainstream academic periodicals by choosing, as a target, the strenuously upheld conventions of ideal beauty and the female nude. The outcome of their attack was a burlesqued version of the ideal, Pre–Raphaelite Beauty.

The press also functioned as a powerful instrument of the Academy. A letter to the President and Council of the Royal Academy from newspaper art-writers very clearly underlines their role in serving this institution: "With all due respect," it read, "we submit to you that publicity is the breath of life to the Academy, that the Press is the machine by which publicity is won and preserved."[4] The esteem in which artist-philosophers such as John Ruskin, William Morris, Walter Crane and others were held by the press and public was evidence of their charisma and appeal. Other established artists were no less reticent in presenting their own theories, and the fact that many of these echoed Academic notions was often a deliberate attempt to preserve its reign over prescribed codes of behavior and expectation. Finally, the public took full advantage of the press as a vehicle through which it could express its own opinions on contemporary art. Editorials and letters to newspaper editors became a powerful tool by which the press — frequently in the service of the Academy — was able to shape and alter public opinion.

Newbery's immunity to Academic control and public opinion acted as a protective umbrella under which Margaret and Frances were free to pursue new forms in art. Neither Newbery nor his students shared the public's perception that they had overstepped their bounds and become the decadent or deviant siblings of their distorted female figures. The Macdonald sisters' controversial posters and designs may not have been entirely understood by their contemporaries, but they at least had the support of Newbery and the GSA students. A fellow student observed that as a direct consequence of the Macdonald sisters' explorations into original forms, the Glasgow School of Art had successfully

> thrown overboard the old conventions and is bravely struggling to uphold a new standard in art — originality even at the expense of excellence . . . It is in pursuit of ideals, however mystic or erratic they may seem, that the future of Art is assured."[5]

This rejection of traditional values and search for original avenues of enquiry was reflected in the emergence of more specialized, polemical journals, many of which had a strong literary emphasis — an indication that art critics and artists (and implicitly the Academy) were no longer the sole arbiters of taste. These newer journals had little or none of the gender bias of mainstream periodicals. In fact, female writers and artists were significant contributors. It should be noted, however, that such new journals should not be seen as prototypes for the Macdonald sisters' work since most of them were launched subsequent to development of the sisters' unique style. The importance of these journals lies in what they represented to the Macdonald sisters and their contemporaries — a progressive force reacting against conventions and controls. In this regard a particular parallel may be drawn between a journal such as the *Yellow Book* and the *Magazine*, both of which reflect a dual literary–art focus. As noted, the Macdonald sisters found a receptive climate in the *Yellow Book* which published their work in 1896. Although the work in the *Yellow Book* does not seem to have influenced the Macdonald sisters, as far as the public was concerned, the sisters and the hideous "New Woman" they had created were linked to Beardsley's decadent femme fatales. Stylistic differences notwithstanding, the public perceived them to be siblings of this New Woman, and as illustrated, the press played an important role in fuelling the controversy:

> The origins, tendencies, even the appearance of the New Woman and the decadent — as portrayed in the popular press and periodicals — confirmed their near, their unhealthily near relationship. Both inspired reactions ranging from hilarity to disgust and outrage, and both raised

> as well profound fears for the future of sex, class and race. . .the figures of the New Woman and the decadent, like the artists who created them and the works in which they appeared, seemed to be dangerous avatars of the "New", and were widely felt to oppose not each other but the values considered essential to the survival of established culture.[6]

In this context it is interesting that the Macdonald sisters' work was later published in the London-based *Yellow Book* but not in Edinburgh's *Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal.* If, as many sources have alleged, the Macdonald sisters' work was informed by a Celtic spirit of the seasons, birth, flowering and harvest, it would seem that their graphic designs would have been appropriate to its focus. This leads one to question whether the Scottish people perceived the Macdonald sisters' symbolism as Celtic, or alternatively viewed it as purely unconventional exploitations of the female form.

As the most predominant of the new periodicals, the *Studio* had a significant impact on the formal development of the Macdonald sisters' style. It was important for various reasons, not all of which relate to the allegedly pivotal works by Toorop and Beardsley. Its mandates and focus were antithetical to both the Academy and its servant publications, primarily because of its recognition that "applied art" (or design) was an equal to "fine" art. Both its circulation and interests were international: whereas the *Art Journal* and *Magazine of Art* held a somewhat defensive attitude to foreign art (reinforcing the notion that British art was superior), the *Studio* actively pursued and presented foreign artists and their ideologies.[7] As noted, it was from one of these foreign sources, Jan Toorop's *Three Brides*, that the Macdonald sisters borrowed formal qualities of line and distortion and a mystical symbolism.

It would also have been particularly relevant to the Macdonald sisters

that the *Studio* placed no importance on gender and imposed none of the prescribed Academic formulas on the nude figure. It insisted on technical expertise but did not attempt to define or adjudicate what constituted "ideal beauty."

It is important to remember that the Macdonald sisters worked in a liberated atmosphere from which they could freely attack academic conventions and replace these with more radical ideas and visuals. The fact that they drew from foreign, or Continental, sources was a clear rejection of British values which included all of the inherent notions of ideal beauty, portrayal of the nude, dominance of male artists in the hierarchy, and the superiority of British art. The latter denial constituted one of the reasons for the negative reaction of the British, but it also enhanced the Macdonald sisters' work in Germany, Austria, Hungary and Italy. In the end, the British (particularly the Glasgow) newspapers continued to reverberate with the laughter and scorn which greeted their early work. Elsewhere, however, accolades appeared in such Continental parallels to the *Studio* — art periodicals such as *Deutsche Kunst* in Germany, *Magyar Iparmuveszet* in Hungary and *Ver Saerum* in Vienna, all of which learned of the sisters' work through the international circulation of the *Studio*. In these publications the Macdonald sisters and their contribution to the style of the Glasgow Four was finally recognized. As *Magyar* stated in 1902, "In British decorative art the centre of gravity has moved from London to Glasgow."[8] No stronger case can be made for the impact of their work and the strength of Glasgow's New Woman in Art than the exclamation by an observer in Germany:

> "In Glasgow English art was no longer hermaphrodite but passed into the hands of women."[9]

In Glasgow, however, a disgruntled spectator from the Art Club Exhibition of 1894 issued an appeal for someone to resolve his puzzlement over the New Woman:

> "Will this new art do anything to elevate the masses to a higher degree of culture? . . . and what new beauty has been created by it for the solace of mankind?"[10]

No one appears to have formulated a satisfactory answer, but the consequences of Margaret and Frances' actions were apparent, if only to Continental art movements and the small group of artists who worked with or succeeded the Macdonald sisters in Glasgow. As an instrumental force in production of the *Magazine*, the Macdonald sisters expressed the need of women artists to have a voice in art matters and to be objectively and fairly represented in art periodicals. The *Magazine* was launched amidst a climate of change and reaction against Academy control. Regardless of its impact on other periodicals or artists, it represents the drive of women artists (who were virtually exempted from mainstream periodicals) for self and artistic expression and the right to re-define obsolete codes of expectation.

A writer from 1902 noted that the appearance of this radical female form amidst the art of the age must be regarded as proof of the process of enquiry and development which has the potential to exist but is perhaps only recognized when it operates as a reaction against convention.[11] Propelled by Francis Newbery's teaching philosophies and the visual and ideological offerings of the *Studio*, the Macdonald sisters vehemently reacted against those conventions.

Glasgow's New Woman was indeed deviant, as were the artists who created her. She was the manifestation of a successful drive for originality

and independence; the product of two spirited and determined sisters whose humor and technical expertise were armour against public opinion and criticism. The Macdonald "School of Spook" can rightfully claim validity as a significant force in the creation of a radical New Woman and a newly liberated female artist.

## FOOTNOTES

### INTRODUCTION

[1]"The Arts and Crafts Exhibition (Third Notice)", *Studio*, Vol. 9, no. 45, December 1896, p. 202.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Pamela Reekie, *Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, 1864–1933* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1983). The author states that Muthesius' comment was made in the Preface to the unpublished folio of the Mackintosh's *House for an Art Lover* designs in 1902.

[4]Gleeson White, "Some Glasgow Designers and their Work (Part 1)," *Studio*, Vol. XI, no. 52, July 1897, p. 92.

[5]Thomas Howarth also acknowledges that the 1893–94 works by the Macdonald sisters reflect a well developed style and technique independent of Mackintosh. He states that ". . .it seems indisputable that the Macdonald sisters themselves had an important part to play in the evolution of the Glasgow style, and that they cannot by any means be dismissed out of hand as mere plagiarists — an opinion that is further strengthened by a closer examination of their early work." Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2d ed., 1977), p. 25.

[6]Reekie, Introduction.

[7]*Ibid.*, Catalogue Entries. A contemporaneous writer also noted that "it is with some relief that one finds the Misses Macdonald are quite willing to have their work jointly attributed — for actuated by the same spirit, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for an outsider to distinguish the hand of each on the evidence of the finished work along." Gleeson White, "Some Glasgow Designers and their Work" (Part I), p. 90.

[8]Reekie, Introduction.

[9]Howarth, p. 24.

[10]P. Morton Shand, "Scenario for a Human Drama: The Glasgow Interlude," *Architectural Review*, LXXVII, January 1935, pp. 23–26.

[11]Letter from P. Morton Shand to William Davidson, March 31, 1933, cited in Reekie, Introduction.

[12]Reekie, Introduction.

[13]A Ph.D. Dissertation on the Macdonald sisters is currently being undertaken by Janice Helland at the University of Victoria.

[14]Of these sources, Howarth's *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement* (1977) and Macleod's subsequent *Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Architect and Artist* (1983) are the most notable, but as their titles suggest their focus is upon Mackintosh. Callen, in *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870–1914* (1979) and Anscombe, in *A Woman's Touch: Women in Design from 1860 to Present Day* (1984) offer more relevant insights into works by contemporaneous designers, but they refer only to Margaret as a very minor component in a broad membership of female artist–craftspeople.

## CHAPTER 1

[1]"The Poster's Mission, or Why I Signed the Pledge," *Quiz*, February 21, 1895.

[2]*Glasgow Evening News*, November 17, 1894, p. 3.

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]A notice of the prize–giving appeared the next day in the *North British Daily Mail*, November 9, 1894.

[5]*Quiz*, November 15, 1894.

[6]*Ibid.* One source notes that the "Further Powers" is a reference to a much disputed bill of the time which gave further powers to police to sweep unruly children and drunks from the streets. Elizabeth Bird, "Ghouls and Gas Pipes: Public Reaction to the Early Work of 'The Four'," *Scottish Art Review*, Vol. XIV, No. 4, 1975, p. 13.

[7]Newspaper clipping contained in Francis Newbery's Press Cuttings Book (hereafter "Press Cuttings"). This Book, currently in the collection of the GSA, contains numerous cuttings from local and Continental periodicals which relate to Francis Newbery, the GSA and its students, and relevant art issues. Some of these are without specific dates and source reference.

[8]*Ibid.*

[9]*Glasgow Evening News*, November 17, 1894, p. 3.

[10]*Ibid.* Alexander Roche was the judge who specifically stated that future judges should be pressed to 'put down that ghoul–like sort of thing'.

[11]Mackintosh and MacNair were also students of the GSA, enrolled in evening classes while the Macdonald sisters were day students. Similarities in their respective styles led Newbery to introduce them to each other sometime

in 1893–94. In subsequent exhibitions they frequently displayed their work in a separate section, and soon became known as "the Glasgow Four."

[12]*Glasgow Evening News*, February 23, 1895, quoted in Elizabeth Bird, "Ghouls and Gas Pipes," p. 16.

[13]Bernard Denvir, *The Late Victorians: Art, Design and Society, 1852–1910.* (London: Longman, 1986), pp. 3–4.

## CHAPTER 2

[1]In 1885, the year in which Francis Newbery became Headmaster, the school ranked third in National Competitions closely following Birmingham & Lambeth. By 1888 it was second highest in the United Kingdom, achieving first place in the National Competitions in 1897. Annual Reports, GSA, 1888–89. William Buchanan, "Mackintosh, Newbery, and the Building of the Glasgow School of Art" (unpublished manuscript, November 17, 1988, p. 2. Original at the Glasgow School of Art.

[2]In 1933, several days after Margaret's death, Newbery's wife Jessie wrote of Margaret and her husband Charles Rennie Mackintosh: "With never a rift between us...our lives were closely and affectionately interwoven...We had great pleasure and pride in watching the rise of their promising careers, great admiration for their gifts and characters." Letter from Jessie Newbery to Mrs. Randolph Schwabe, January 12, 1933, in Pamela Reekie, "The Mackintosh Circle" Part II, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter* No. 31, Winter/Spring 1981–82.

[3]Press cuttings, GSA. Sir Harry Barnes, in "The Mackintosh Circle, Part I: The Newberys" *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter* No. 30, Autumn 1981, pp. 7–12, provides a detailed account of Newbery's teaching career. Born in Devon, Newbery remained in England where he taught at the Art Training School in South Kensington, the hub of the art school system in the British Isles. He was only 27 when appointed as Headmaster of the Glasgow School of Art and Haldane Academy.

[4]Pamela Reekie, *Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh.* (Glasgow: Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, 1983), p. 1.

[5]Sir Harry Barnes states that Newbery "quite certainly" championed "The Four (Margaret, Frances, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Herbert MacNair) — 'The Spook School' — when Glasgow had very little time for them." Barnes, p. 8.

[6]Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, *The Glasgow Style 1890–1920.* (Glasgow, 1984), p. 6.

[7]*Studio*, Vol. 38, 1907, p. 31.

[8]The most significant Glasgow Style designs were produced by "The Four". Other principal artists were associated with the Glasgow Style included James

Salmon, Talwin Morris, Jessie Newbery and Helen Walton. Roughly another fifty artists, approximately half of whom were women, are considered relevant (though in some cases these links are tenuous).

[9]*The Glasgow Style*, p. 8.

[10]Helensburgh & District Art Club, *West of Scotland Women Artists 25th Anniversary Loan Exhibition 1951–1976* (Glasgow: Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, 1976).

[11]Ailsa Tanner, "Some Scottish Women Artists of the Past", *Chapman Magazine*, Vol. XI, no. 3–4, Summer 1980, p. 55.

[12]*Ibid.*, p. 57.

[13]Liz Bird, "Threading the Beads: Women in Art in Glasgow 1870–1920", *Unchartered Lives: Extracts from Scottish Women's Experiences, 1850–1982.* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow 1983), p. 101. It should also be pointed out that by contrast, the GSA, from its earliest designs to completion (1895–99) was structured as a co–educational facility, with a single main entrance. Blueprints for the building, kindly provided by William Buchanan, current Headmaster of the GSA, show Mens' and womens' private areas (change room, washroom, *etc.*) to be equal in size and location. From 1848 onwards, classes at the GSA were also co–educational.

[14]Proceedings of Annual Meeting, GSA, February 9, 1885, p. 11.

[15]Elsewhere in Britain, women who sought art education could look to the Female School of Design. Established in London at Somerset House in 1842, this institution followed the prescribed mandates of the Normal School of Design (London, 1837) with emphasis on the allegedly appropriate art education for women. Aimed at "...enabling young women of middle class to obtain honourable and profit employment and partly to improve ornamental design in manufacture by cultivating the taste of the designer" it also expressly exempted women from the category of Academy artist — professional painters of large–scale works associated with "high art". Quoted in Angela Callen, *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement, 1870–1914.* (London: Astragal Books, 1979), p. 27, originating from Thomas Purnell "Women and Art" *Art Journal*, 1861, p. 107.

[16]Sir James Watson, President of the GSA in 1885, (the year in which Newbery was appointed Headmaster) stated that "In regard to designing, this was the chief object in view when this institution was established about 40 years ago. (Applause) Hence it was then known as a School of Design, and in company with the other like schools established in a few of the larger towns of the kingdom, had for its specific objects "the influencing and improving of ornamental design in manufacture." (Press cuttings, GSA)

[17]From their origin, these Government institutions were open to both sexes; however by the mid–19th century the influx of middle–class, self–supporting women as students upset the balance of artisan and middle class representation. Two types of art instruction were established to resolve this

problem: daytime sessions at higher fees for ladies and gentlemen (seldom attended by the latter) and early morning or evening sessions for workers. Aside from its financial feasibility (the structure also provided a fee income for the School) this arrangement freed staff to teach "pure" art (Bird, p. 102).

[18]Press Cutting Books, GSA.

[19]An 1872 issue of *Art Journal* asks: "To whom should we so confidently apply for all that concerns the beautifying of home–life as to the presiding spirit of the home? Why should not the instinctive taste and natural grace of woman be reflected in the hues and harmonies of colour and form on the walls of her rooms, on the curtains arranged by her deft fingers, on the soft carpet beneath her feet, and in the thousand forms of comfort, convenience or elegance which surround her?" Quoted in Bernard Denvir, *The Late Victorians: Art, Design and Society, 1852–1910* (London: Longman, 1986), p. 3.

[20]Quoted in Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (ed.) *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) p. 9, from "Works of John Ruskin" *Library Edition*, vol. XVIII, 1905, p. 122.

[21]Quoted in Denvir, p. 54–55, from G.D. Leslie, R.A., *The Inner Life of the Royal Academy* (1914).

[22]*Ibid.*, p. 54.

[23]For a thorough discussion, see Isabelle Anscombe and Charlotte Gere, *Arts and Crafts in Britain and America* (London: Academy Editions, 1978); and *A Woman's Touch: Women in Design from 1860 to Present Day* (London: Viking, 1984); Angela Callen, *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement, 1870–1914* (London: Astragal Books, 1979); Ann Ferebee, *A History of Design from the Victorian Era to the Present* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970); Germaine Greer, *The Obstacle Race* (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1979); Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (ed.) *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981); and for a more historical overview, see Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin *Women Artists: 1550–1950*, Exhibition Catalogue, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1984).

[24]Anscombe, p. 28.

[25]*Magazine of Art*, April 1888, pp. xxv–xxvi.

[26]*Ibid.*

[27]Walter Crane and William Morris lectured regularly in both Glasgow (at the GSA) and Edinburgh; and, under Newbery's direction, GSA students participated in the London–based Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society.

[28]Glasgow Society of Women Artists. *A Centenary Exhibition to celebrate the founding of the Glasgow society of Lady Artists in 1882.* (Glasgow: Collins Gallery, 1982), p. 5. Elspeth King, in *The Scottish Women's Suffrage*

*Movement* (Glasgow: David J. Clark Ltd., 1985) claims it to be the "oldest club of its kind in Britain." (p. 18)

[29]Frances Macdonald had left Glasgow to live in Liverpool with her husband, Herbert MacNair.

[30]Ailsa Tanner, *A Centary Exhibition to celebrate the founding of the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists in 1882* (Glasgow: Collins Gallery, 1983), p. 6.

[31]*Ibid.*, p. 5.

[32]While the first Scottish Women's Suffrage Society had been formed in Edinburgh in 1867, it was not until 1906 that women graduates of the Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews succeeded in drawing attention to gross inconsistencies of denying votes to (female) doctors, teachers and lawyers whilst granting them to ex-criminals and illiterates merely on grounds of sex. The Parliamentary seat jointly held by the two universities was contested for the first time since women were admitted as graduates. "Persons of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity" who were graduates of either university were allowed to vote. The women demanded and were refused their voting papers. After a protracted law suit, the women eventually lost their case." Elspeth King, *The Scottish Women's Suffrage Movement*, (Glasgow: David J. Clark Ltd., Glasgow, 1985), p. 11–12.

[33]King, p. 18.

[34]There is no evidence to show whether or not the Macdonald sisters were actively involved; however they were close and longstanding friends of the major participants. Margaret and Frances were also an integral part of the elite group (members including those who were very involved in the Suffragette movement) which created the School's own publication, the *Magazine*. (See Chapter 4).

[35]King, p. 19. Ann Macbeth later (in 1912) represented the GSA in the Students Careers Association for Women and one year later was appointed Lady Warden in the Art School.

[36]GSA School Registers, 1890–95. Bird, in "Women and Art Education", *Glasgow Girls: Women in the Art School 1880–1920*, p. 25, gives these percentages as 1881–82 = 28%; 1892–93 = 35% and 1901–02 = 47%. My research at the GSA yielded the following percentages which have been verified by the Fine Art Librarian of the GSA: 1890–91 = 36%; 1891–92 = 37%; 1892–93 = 36%; 1893–94 = 38% and 1894–94 = 36%.

[37]"Women at the Royal Academy Schools", *Magazine of Art*, 1889.

[38]Frances taught design for metalwork, repousse and embroidery between 1909 and 1911 after her marriage to Herbert MacNair and their return from Liverpool.

[39]*Scottish Art Review* pointed out that "Among the art industries of women, needlework holds, as it probably will always hold, the most prominent place;

not because it is either the most profitable the most healthful, or the easiest, but because the needle is still the tool whose use is most universally taught to girls. Therefore when necessity or inclination leads a woman to practise art as an industry, and not merely to indulge in it as a pastime, she turns more readily to the needle than to the brush, the chisel, or the hammer." "Women's Work in Art Industries", Pt. I, p. 131.

[40]Bird, in "Threading the Beads: Women in Art in Glasgow, 1870–1920" at p. 106, also refers to a study by Marjorie Cruikshank, *History of the Training of Teachers in Scotland* (London: University of London Press, 1980).

[41]*The Studio* devoted extensive articles to Jessie Newbery's work in 1897 (Gleeson White, "Some Glasgow Designers and their Work", Vol. XII, pp. 47–51). In 1902, it also advised its readers to "Look to the Glasgow School of Art if we wish to think of today's embroidery as a thing that lives and grows and is therefore of greater value and interest than a display of archaeology in patterns and stitches" (*Glasgow School of Art Embroidery* 1894–1920, Vol. XXVI, p. 101).

[42]The school had previously retained two female instructors of drawing, Miss Patrick and Miss Greenlees; however they left the school in 1881.

[43]Headmaster's Report, GSA Records, 1890.

[44]GSA Records, Annual Reports of 1892 and 1893.

[45]The prevalence of female instructors at the GSA was related to somewhat contradictory factors. It has been noted that the more traditional middle–class "ladylike" endeavors (tacitly withheld at an amateur level) included proficiency in the arts as a leisure pastime. Within this ideological current, women for whom employment was deemed improper were actively seeking a profession. Teaching — not at a secondary level but in specialized areas — provided the perfect solution. As increasing numbers of women from predominantly middle–class homes chose the accepted pursuit of art, their expanded skills allowed entrance into a rapidly female–dominated profession. Bird, "Threading the Beads", p. 104.

[46]Keates, 1887.

[47]I gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Julia and Geoff Powell, of Shropshire, England, whose own research into the Macdonald sisters has uncovered these previously unknown details of the Macdonald sisters' early years. This information was drawn from tax records for the area, and from the Orme Girls' School Archives. Evidence of registration was provided to me by the Powells in the form of photographic copies of hand–written records from 1876–84 which verify Margaret's enrollment at that institution. None of the sources located to date refer to this earlier period, with the exception of a brief reference in the *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, no. 41, Autumn 1985, which acknowledges the great value of this information in helping to fill the "mystery years" of the Macdonald sisters before they moved to Glasgow c. 1889.
Julia Powell held a teaching post at Newcastle–Under–Lyme School (known as

the Orme Girls' School when Margaret attended) for seventeen years, retiring in December of 1988.

[48]The May issue of *The Glasgow Evening News* (May 22, 1895) carried a commentary on "The Glasgow School of Art: A Flourishing Institution" wherein Newbery stated that his program did not include drawing from the copy; and until the student could draw and paint well, there was no copying from pictures.

[49]GSA Headmaster's Report, Haldane Academy, February 1885.

[50]The majority of awards were given for applied design.

[51]Ailsa Tanner, "Women Painters of the Glasgow School of Art, 1880–1920", in *Glasgow Girls: Women in the Art School 1880–1920* (Glasgow: Glasgow School of Art, 1988), p. 30. Tanner, whose mother was enrolled at the GSA from 1902–07, traces the careers of a number of female students from the GSA, citing various awards earned by them at an international level. She also acknowledges Newbery's great influence: "A great debt is owed to his enlightened attitude towards women students. He treated them equally with men and gave them the opportunity to realise their talents. . .Under his despotic but benign rule talent blossomed. . ." (*ibid*, p. 30)

[52]Elizabeth Bird, "The Designers", in *Glasgow Girls: Women in the Art School 1880–1920*, p. 26. Bird does not provide full reference for the quotation, stating only that the article was printed in 1890, "after a particularly good year for the School in the South Kensington competitions."

[53]The GSA Annual Report of 1895 states that the objections came from a Mr. Stevenson. There were no further comments in that regard.

[54]*Glasgow Evening News*, November 17, 1894, p. 3.

[55]*Quiz*, December 6, 1894.

[56]This information is taken directly from a series of Glasgow School of Art Annual Reports for the following Annual Meetings: February 22, 1892; February 2, 1893; February 6, 1894 and February 22, 1895.

[57]*Glasgow Evening News*, November 16, 1894. The writer signed his letter to the editor by initials only: "G.L.E."

[58]Excerpt from *Glasgow Evening News*, Press Cutting Book, GSA.

[59]Press cuttings; excerpt from meeting of Committee of Management, c. 1885.

[60]"Glasgow School of Art: A Flourishing Institution." *Glasgow Evening News*, Wednesday, May 22, 1895.

## CHAPTER 3

[1]This is particularly true of the Macdonald Sisters, whose commissioned works, produced subsequent to their tenure at the GSA, are considerably more restrained than those produced in the period 1890–95. Notably, the later commissioned works avoid nude figures, substituting instead either elaborate costume or decorative lines to represent the female form.

[2]David Anderson, The *Magazine of Art*, 1888, p. 104.

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]The views of The *Magazine of Art* have been discussed in Chapter 2. Notwithstanding its opposition, the magazine did not exclude women artists entirely; however it limited its coverage to exhibition reviews, in which they invariably were a minor element. Articles by women primarily related to historical artifacts or arts and crafts. For example, a Mrs. H.R. Haweis wrote on "Art in Christmas Decorations" (1888, p. 104); Miss S.T. Prideaux on "Embroidered Book Covers" (1890, p. 426) and "Book–Edge Decoration" (1892, p. 94) and Miss F. Mabel Robinson on "Art Patrons" (a regular feature). In the five year period 1890–95 there are only three instances in which women wrote on contemporary artists, all of whom were male.

[5]In 1891 six of these were photographs, accompanying "The Artistic Aspects of Figure Photography (pp. 310–315); and the remaining two were miniatures in "The English School of Miniature Art" (p. 347). Most of the submissions were drawings or designs.

[6]Pollock quotes a relatively modern source as stating that "Flower painting demands no genius of taking pains and supreme craftsmanship. . .In all three hundred years of the production the total practitioners of flowers down to 1880 is less than seven hundred. . .Whilst only a very small proportion are artists of the highest or even high merit. Actually more than 200 of these are of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and at least half are women." Martin H. Grant, *Flower Painting Through Four Centuries* (Lee–on–See, Eng.: F. Lewis, 1952) 21, quoted in Pollock, "Women, Art and Ideology: Questions for Feminist Art Historians," *Woman's Art Journal*, vol. 4, no. 1, Spring/ Summer 1983.

[7]One source states that women contributed more work to 19th Century exhibitions in these three categories than any other clearly defined category by virtue of women's art education at that time. She also states that women exhibited more portraits at Royal Academy exhibitions than other classes of work; and that portraits were most numerous at the Society of British Artists until mid–century. Charlotte Elizabeth Yeldham, "Women Artists in 19th Century France and England" (Ph.D. Diss., Courtauld Inst., 1984, p. 151).

[8]The *Magazine*, January 1894, p. xiv.

[9]Walter Crane, "The Language of Line", *Magazine of Art* (1888), p. 145, 325, 415; W. Holman Hunt, "The Proper Mode and Study of Drawing" (*ibid*), 1891, p. 80, 116; William Black, "The Illustrating of Books" (*ibid*) 1891, p. 28.

Others include Thomas Woolner, "A Word to Students: Where to Draw the Line" (*ibid*), 1892, p. 7).

[10]These paintings hawe been destroyed or remain untraced.

[11]Billcliffe and Howarth state that Mackintosh and, to a lesser extent, MacNair concurrently produced images which earned the Four this nickname. *Harvest Moon* of 1892 (Fig. 14) and MacNair's *The Lovers* of 1893 are generally acknowledged as two of the images which prompted the label, but neither of these approach the eerie mysticism and melancholy that the Macdonald sisters achieve.

[12]Walter Crane, "Design in Two Parts" (Part II), The *Magazine of Art*, 1893, p. 131.

[13]Newbery, in a published interview, made it clear that Kensington did not prescribe rules or regulations for drawing and design techniques, but implied that some institutions perceived Kensington as dictatorial: "The schools where South Kensington is regarded as a bugbear are the schools where weakness at the top has necessitated refuge being taken behind what some people are pleased to call the South Kensington system. We find that Kensington is very reasonable. It may be slightly red tapish of course, now and then, but it is ever ready to recognize conscientious, if unconventional, effort." Newbery also remarked that Kensington "has more than once said it wasn't educated quite up to our designs, and we have replied that we never thought it was, but hoped it would be some day." *Glasgow Evening News*, 1895 (Press Cuttings Book).

[14]For analysis of prescribed forms and technical requisites by a writer from the period, see Christopher Dresser's *The Art of Decorative Design* (1862); *Principles of Decorative Design* (1873); and Owen Jones' *Grammar of Ornament* (1856).

[15]"The Firm", established in 1861, was a collaborative effort which included, among others, Morris as initiator, Burne–Jones, Rossetti, and the architect Philip Webb. Much of Morris's patronage came from the architects of the Gothic Revival; therefore stained glass became a specialty. Burne–Jones was particularly adept at this and had designed a Pre–Raphaelite window for Bradfield College as early as 1857. He also taught stained–glass at the Working Men's College, and was generally responsible for the figures in Morris windows which may be found in many churches throughout England. Hilton, pp. 172–73.

[16]According to an extensive newspaper account of this event, Horsley's lecture — originally intended to focus on "Religion and Art: Their Influence on Each Other" — was one of two choices offered to the audience, the other being "Women's Work in the Church". Horsley claimed the larger audience, half of which were women of various ages. He cited the current newspaper controversy as to "the right or wrong of art representations of female nakedness", coupled with the public's ignorance of "the principal evil connected with the subject", as his reason for this change of topic (Press Cuttings Book, GSA).

[17]*Ibid.*

[18]*Ibid.*

[19]*Ibid.*

[20]GSA Annual Report for 1882–83, January 4th, 1885, pp. 7, 8. It should also be noted that Simmonds was Headmaster of the Derby School of Art before his arrival at the GSA in 1881. The last prospectus for that school under his leadership might be contrasted with this. In it, Life Classes are offered presumably to everyone, but the model is draped. Nude classes are also offered but for "male students only". This caveat is never stated in the case of GSA records. Derby School of Art Minutes, 22 December 1881).

[21]See also J. Diane Radycki, "The Life of Lady Art Students: Changing Art Education at the Turn of the Century" in *Women's Art Journal* (Spring 1982), p. 9–13 for interesting parallels of women artists and art students in France and Germany.
Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin in "The Nineteenth Century: England, France and the United States" in *Women Artists 1550–1950*, pp. 50–58 (Knopf: New York 1984) provide a more detailed description of Academy regulations in relation to the female art student and her access to the nude model. By 1893, after constant petitioning, women students were granted a nude male model — that is, nude except for "ordinary bathing drawers, and a cloth of light material 9 feet long by 3 feet wide, which shall be wound round the loins over the drawers, passed between the legs and tucked in over the waistband, and finally a thin leather strap shall be fastened round the loins in order to insure the cloth keeps its place." J.N. Anderson, Papers, Royal Academy, xxvi, cited in Harris and Nochlin, p. 52.
In January 1890 the *Artist* notes that "The Academy students include 110 women and girls and these have applied for permission to paint the nude." Later it states that "Ladies studying art will hear with pleasure that the Council of the Royal Academy has at last decided to permit them to study from the living model. The concession was limited, it is true, to figures not wholly devoid of drapery, but this, at least, is a step towards placing its pupils on an equality with those at South Kensington." Finally, in 1903, mixed classes were instituted; however segregated life classes were maintained. The *Artist*, January 1890, p. 14; March 1890, p. 81

[22]A GSA official states that according to an ex-student of the GSA, Life classes were still segregated as late as 1916. Awards in the National Competitions where the subject is made absolutely clear affix a "C" to the Section Number (*e.g.* Stage 8C–2 is "Chalk Drawing of figure from the nude") GSA Annual Report 1893. Stuart Macdonald, in *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, pp. 388–91 states that Stage 8C is drawing from the living nude model (8D is the living draped model). The 1896 GSA Annual Report for the session 1894–95 show that the GSA follows this system.
The GSA Prospectus for 1893–94 also contains a timetable for Life Classes, offering separate men's and women's classes in the mornings, five days per week. In the afternoon they held classes for Elementary Head or Draped Model; since gender of students is not specified classes were probably mixed.

Given the specific reference to "Draped" in non-segregated classes, it is likely that segregated classes drew from the nude model.

[23]Horsley cites a case where a young lady, induced to draw from naked models, said she found the pursuit a most fascinating one, but becoming aware of its demoralizing influence upon her own feminine nature she gave up the work commenced and never resumed it. The *Artist*, November 1885, p. 334.

[24]*Ibid.*

[25]*Ibid.*

[26]*Ibid.*

[27]Horsley gave a similar presentation to the Art Congress in Edinburgh (October–November, 1889) on the Government Schools of Design. The *Artist* also printed an extensive report of this and other papers by Briton Riviera, G.F. Watts, J.E. Hodgson, Onslow Ford and others in its December 1, 1889 issue. The audience was comprised of about 300 people, two-thirds of which were women. The *Artist* reports that Horsley was received "with amused attention" but this dissipated when he referred to the 700 English and American women in the ateliers in Paris who, along with French medical students, spent their time in hospital dissecting rooms in order to study the nude figure. Horsley had apparently

> ". . .entreated Christian men and women present to do their utmost towards bringing to their senses those senseless female art students of our time who, in their preposterous efforts to unsex themselves, and claiming front places on the male platform, brought dishonour and contempt on themselves and their country."

When Horsley declared that attempting the highest walks of art was an utter mistake on the part of women, and that an Act of Parliament making the practice illegal and punitive would benefit everyone, he was "well hissed". "The Art Congress", The *Artist*, December 1, 1889, p. 359–361.

[28]*Ibid.*

[29]This collection of cuttings which comprise five volumes, is currently in the collection of the GSA.

[30]An article dated 1895 from Newbery's Press Cutting Book quotes Professor Cleland as saying "The view of the artist ought not . . . be out of harmony with the view of the man of science. In all study of the universe, the same qualities were brought into play. They must have earnestness, accuracy, and precision; . . . for the highest work they must have also imagination." Cleland also indicated that he had observed the preciseness and accuracy of instruction at the GSA; and that "with regard to his own department, he could speak of the extreme care displayed by Mr. Newbery and the other masters to have the human body properly understood from an artistic point of view."

[31]*Pall Mall Budget*, October 15, 1885, p. 11.

[32]*Ibid.*

[33]"The Church Congress: Artists' Models" (Press Cuttings, GSA, p. 25).

[34]*Pall Mall Budget*, October 15, 1885, p. 12.

[35]*Ibid.*, p. 13.

[36]*Ibid.*, p. 14.

[37]*Ibid.*, p. 13.

[38]In "The Poster's Mission: Or Why I Signed the Pledge (Dedicated to the Glasgow School of Art") J. Cebone concludes his poem, which appeared in *Quiz*, February 21, 1895, as follows:

> *"That night I returned from a concert*
> *Of a scarcely clerical kind,*
> *And I gazed again at the hoarding,*
> *Great Whistler! what horrors I find--*
> *A two-headed serpentine dancer*
> *Most ghoulishly grins down at me,*
> *"I've got 'em again", cried I wildly,*
> *So that's why I became T.T."*

[39]*Glasgow Evening News*, November 17, 1894, p. 3.

[40]It is interesting to compare an assessment of Burne-Jones' ideal women by a more modern writer, who states that "Here is an aspect of Burne-Jones's art which deserves manly commendation, for even if he did it with something of a sly, voyeurish quality, Burne-Jones did put an end to the latitancy of the mid-Victorian nude. (Nude painting had unfortunately disappeared during the Pre-Raphaelite years . . .) It is always nice to see a breast in a painting, or as delicately glorious a bottom as Andromeda's, like a pale peach at sunrise . . . The historical point is that he painted nudes at a time when naturalism could be combined with idealism, and it is the idealism that makes his nudes so much more shapely than those of Etty, but at the same time less tangible. That, of course, is the trouble with ideal girls." Timothy Hilton, *The Pre-Raphaelites*, 1970, pp. 200-201.

[41]From *The Aesthetic Movement in England*, 3rd ed. (London, (1882), quoted in Spencer, *The Aesthetic Movement*, p. 14).

[42]George du Maurier, "The Illustrating of Books From the Serious Artist's Point of View — II", The *Magazine of Art*, 1890, p. 371.

[43]*Ibid.*, p. 372.

[44]From Furniss, Harry, "Originality in Pen Drawing and Design", *Magazine of Art*, 1893, pp. 20-24.

[45]*Ibid*, p. 24.

[46]"The Chronicle of Art", *Magazine of Art*, January 1892, p. xv. The article congratulates Prof. Anderson on his introduction of the translated work of *The Human Figure: Its Beauties and Defects* by Ernest Brucke.

[47]References to the French frequently reflected a paranoiac overtone which became, by some writers such as Holman Hunt, blatantly hostile. However, the *Magazine of Art* did publish a letter to its editor which it entitled "A Word to Young English Painters" wherein the writer proclaimed France and England as the only two national schools which "alone possess that national poetic sense which endows each of them with a distinctly individual pictural art." He strongly recommended English artists to learn the trade secrets of the French to achieve greater freshness in their coloration (which was often too yellow and too rancid). "A Word to Young English Painters; a Letter from Monsieur Fernand Cormon to the Editor of The Magazine of Art", *Magazine of Art*, 1893, p. 11.

[48]The name "Academy" derives from Plato's Academy of the 15th Century; the first art academies being connected to Leonardo da Vinci (Milan) and Bertoldo (Florence). The first Academy of Fine Arts, properly speaking, was founded in 1563 in Florence by Vasari with significant input by Michelangelo. LeBrun's directorship of the French Academy (1683) maintained a strict hierarchy of members graded according to their practiced form of art (history painters at the top, followed by portraitists, with landscape and genre at the lowest level). It was not until 1768 that the Royal Academy was founded, in London, with 40 Academicians and 20 Associates. Unlike others, it derived from private enterprise (though it enjoyed Royal patronage) and never had any state control, subsidies, or monopolies on exhibitions. During the reign of late 19th century conservatism Academies represented the centre of opposition to all new ideas in art; thus "academic" became synonymous with dullness, conventionalism and prejudice. Peter and Linda Murray, *Dictionary of Art & Artists*, Penguin Books, 5th ed. (1983), p. 2.

[49]Holman Hunt, "The Proper Mode and Study of Drawing, Addressed to Students – Part II", *Magazine of Art*, 1891, p. 118. Hunt's article suggests that literally "legions" of foreign artists came annually to exhibit in Britain; yet there is minimal coverage of their shows in *Art Journal* and *Magazine of Art*. Foreign influence, Hunt believed, was a force equivalent to Hate: "The lust of degrading holy things and immortal hopes to the passing desire, to selfish moments and fruitlessness. The ingenuity that devotes itself to such ends is not Art, any more than devil-worship is religion — than Caliban is the high priest of divine philosophy. The influence from abroad is doing what it can do to introduce such travesty of Art into England, and indeed, it is already here" (*ibid*, p. 119).

[50]Denvir, p. 4.

[51]See Robert Goldwater, *Symbolism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 46–52 and 249–258); Julian Halsby, *Scottish Watercolours 1740–1940* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1986), pp. 172–181; William Hardie, *Scottish Painting*

*1897–1939* (London: Studio Vista, 1976), pp. 83–88; Edward Lucie–Smith, *Symbolist Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1972), Chapter 10 "The English 1890's," pp. 127–141. Luigi Carluccio, in the Exhibition Catalogue *The Sacred and Profane in Symbolist Art* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1969) also includes Frances and Margaret Macdonald as Symbolist artists.

[52]Walter Shaw–Sparrow, "Fernand Khnopff", *Magazine of Art*, 1891, p. 39.

[53]*Ibid.*, p. 42.

[54]*Ibid.*, p. 43.

[55]*Ibid.*, p. 42.

[56]"Art in January", *Magazine of Art*, January 1892, pp. xiii–xiv.

[57]*Ibid.*, p. xiv.

[58]The others mentioned were Charles Cazin, Blanche C. Meunier and Luc Olivier Merson.

[59]Edward Lucie–Smith, *Symbolist Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1972), p. 111.

[60]"An Aesthetic 'Society of the Rosy + Cross'", *Magazine of Art*, January 1892, p. xiv.

[61]*Ibid.* Again it is impossible to claim stylistic affiliations between the Macdonald sisters' images and the Rosicrucians, other than a shared symbolist style which has only recently been acknowledged.

[62]Both primary and secondary reviewers affirm formal stylistic precedents for the sisters' designs which include Egyptian art, Celtic ornament and the flat, decorative qualities of Japanese prints (Gleeson White, "Some Glasgow Designers and their Work" Part 1, *The Studio*, XI, July 1897, p. 92; Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2nd ed., 1977) pp. 223–257; Robert Macleod, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Architect and Artist* (London: E.P. Dutton, 1983). Most secondary sources also align the Macdonald sisters with all or any of Aubrey Beardsley, Jan Toorop, Rossetti, Burne–Jones and Whistler through symbolic qualities of line and content.

[63]The more prominent members of this group included Rodin and Rops. Thorn Prikker, whose work was very likely a source for the Macdonald sisters' forms, was erroneously referred to as "Torn Pukker", one of several "unknowns". Jan Toorop is discussed more extensively in the next chapter in conjunction with his important piece *The Three Brides*. It is also important to note that two of the Macdonald sisters' Scottish predecessors, Hornel and Henry, were also influenced by and exhibited with the Belgian group. Newbery is also known to have maintained particularly strong ties with art schools in that country. Whistler's work was never illustrated, and Beardsley did not appear in that publication until 1896, when Margaret Armour

scathingly brands him as a Decadent who "must gloat upon ugliness and add to it; and if it is not there, he must create it." *Magazine of Art*, vol. 20 (1896), p. 10.

## CHAPTER 4

[1]Diane Chalmers Johnson, "The Studio: A Contribution to the '90's," *Apollo*, Vol. 91, March 1970, p. 198. Johnson points out that the first issue of this periodical reflects the chief concerns and the most important figures of the time: posters, Beardsley, photography and Japanese art.

[2]The first issue would have appeared very early in 1894 since the editorial and many other contributions are dated October or November of 1893. The second and third issues were dated as "April" and "Autumn" of 1894; the final, "Spring No. 1896." Most of the Macdonald sisters' more provocative early images are contained in the first three issues of the periodical. These include studies for designs (*Summer*, *Path of Life*, *Ascension*, *Crucifixion*. Others (*Eve*, *A Pond*, are either originals of or preliminary studies for the graphic works (including posters) which elicited the published negative response from the public.

[3]Drawings and paintings were either made directly onto the heavy paper which comprised the contents of the *Magazine*, or glued into place.

[4]Lucy Raeburn, "Round the Studios," the *Magazine*, 1894, p. 22–25.

[5]*Ibid.* Raeburn was referring to Aitken's realistic black and white sketch of "an old lady's head."

[6]*Ibid.* The subjects engaged in "artistically" playing a game of tag are suggestive of the manner and style of pursuits connected with the prevailing Aesthetic Movement. Raeburn's tone implies a disdain for the mindless pursuits of these aesthetically–obsessed females.

[7]Janet Aitken, "Some Words on Originality," the *Magazine*, 1894, p. 27.

[8]*Ibid.*

[9]A predominance of literary themes in art was not unique at that time in Britain. As one source notes, the 19th century, especially from 1830, abounded in literature derived from legend, mythology and the bible. Purely descriptive accounts of famous men and women from history — ancient, medieval and modern — were common; the subject of *Ophelia* being particularly popular amongst women artists. Charlotte Elizabeth Yeldham, "Women Artists in 19th Century France and England: Their Art Education, Exhibition Opportunities and Membership of Exhibiting Societies and Academies, with an assessment of the subject matter of their work and summary biographies" (Ph.D. Diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1984), pp. 133–135.

[10]These two essays were from the Autumn 1894 issue, pp. 20–23 and p. 7.

[11]For example, one of several handwritten entries immediately following Lucy Raeburn's critique, read:–

> *"The pursuit of fame is either our duty or a pitiable weakness unworthy of a man";*

and J. Wilson contributed this Arab proverb:

> *"Men are four – he who knows not, and knows not he knows not, he is a fool – shun him; he who knows not, and knows he knows not, he is simple – teach him; he who knows, and knows not he knows, he is asleep – wake him; he who knows, and knows he known, he is wise – follow him"*
>
> (April Number, 1894, p. 9)

[12]Yeldham, pp. 147–148. Yeldham states that in the main, women's general and art education did not equip them for proficiency in grand classical subjects. She suggests that because of such restrictions many female artists unconsciously elevated everyday subject matter by imbuing it with greater meaning, thus invoking a higher level of significance in the particular.

[13]Charles Rennie Mackintosh (later husband of Margaret) contributed eleven of the sixteen works by male artists who included Leonard Guthrie, D.Y. Camerson, Henry Mitchel and J. Craig Annam. The latter provided several innovative photographs of the Beach at Zandvoort which were dismissed by other critics as "modern eccentricities." These were published later in 1894 in the *Studio* and, in the following year, in *Photographic Times* (New York) and *Photographische Blatter* (Vienna). Buchanan, p. 6.

[14]The literature and art in each issue were categorized under "Nature," "Life," "The World" and "the North." For example, Patrick Geddes' "The Sociology of Autumn" which covered, among others, "How Cities may be viewed in Nature and her Seasons" and "How decadent Art and Literature normally develop their colour, and produce their decay," was included in the Autumn 1895 issue under "Autumn in Life."

[15]Patrick Geddes, "Envoy," *Evergreen*, Winter 1896–97, pp. 155–56.

[16]Robert Goldwater, *Symbolism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 257–258.

[17]See Hardie, p. 86; original in the collection of the Dundee Art Gallery, Scotland.

[18]William Hardie, *Scottish Painting 1837–1939* (London: Studio Vista, 1976), pp. 85–86). See also Chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 72–88) which deal specifically with the Glasgow School and the Fin de Siecle in which Hardie discusses the Glasgow Four. Julian Halsby, in *Scottish Watercolours 1740–1940* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1986), at p. 198, also mentions that Davidson's *Envy* looks forward to Art Deco and the designs for the Ballet Russe, while their abstract nature links them with Mackintosh's more introspective work.

[19]Patrick Geddes expressed his delight that Charles Mackie's design for the embossed leather cover of *Evergreen* was the plant "aloe plicatilis": "I take it as an omen that Science and Art are to be better friends than ever." *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[20]*Magazine of Art*, November 1893, p. 25.

[21]*Despair* (now destroyed or lost), was summarized as ". . .two figures whose sorrow has worn them to shadows, and whose tears have watered their eyelashes and made them grow to rather an alarming extent. . ." Lucy Raeburn, "Round the Studios," p. 1.

[22]It is interesting to compare the central figures in Figures 9 and 12 with Mackintosh's *The Harvest Moon* (Fig. 14) of 1892. Mackintosh's winged creature closely resembles the type of stylized female commonly found in Art Nouveau designs (notwithstanding his professed distaste for that movement). Her thickened wings form the circular composition within which she and the moon are enclosed — an obvious allegorical reference. Mackintosh's shapely figure is more of a floating apparition, perched upon a strange cloud which in fact bears remarkable resemblance to Cabanel's *Venus*. (This resemblance to Cabanel's painting was pointed out to me by George Rawson, Fine Art Librarian at the Glasgow School of Art, in November of 1988.)

[23]*Ascension* and *Crucifixion* were contained in the April, 1894 issue of the *Magazine*; however, given their similarity to the series of graphic designs for the GSA Club "At Home," in particular the flattened, Byzantine–like drapery which partially clothes the figures, these pieces were likely completed in the fall of 1893. Although other sources do not list an exact date, records at the GSA date this piece c. 1893.

[24]Andrew McLaren Young, Introduction to *Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928) Architecture, Design & Painting* (Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council, 1968), p. 22.

[25]William Buchanan states that Mackintosh shamelessly plagiarized this and other key statements by J.D. Sedding (as well as comments made by Lethaby) in a number of lectures presentations. He theorizes that Mackintosh probably became aware of these in the *Builder* of October 1891 when Lethaby wrote a brief note on Sedding's death. Buchanan, pp. 4–6.

[26]Charles F.A. Voysey (1857–1941), was one of the primary forces in the Arts & Crafts Movement. Selected by the *Studio* as "a typical instance of an artist whose designs are better known than is their author," Voysey consented to an interview only when the *Studio* represented its aim of raising the appreciation of design, "and to that end the maker of patterns must sacrifice himself for the good of his art, even as popular picture–makers have done for some time past." ("An Interview with Mr. Charles F. Annesley Voysey, Architect and Designer," *Studio*, Vol. I, no. 5, August 1893, p. 232.)

[27]*Ibid.*, p. 233.

[28]*Ibid.*, pp. 233–234.

[29]Although the Glasgow Four (the Macdonald Sisters, Mackintosh and MacNair) are frequently delegated as Art Nouveau artists by some sources, Mackintosh expressed a strong dislike for this style. Mary Sturrock, daughter of Francis Newbery, states that neither the Newberys nor Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald liked Art Nouveau. "He (Mackintosh) fought against it with these straight lines against these things you can see yourself are like melted margarine or slightly deliquescent lard." June Bedford and Ivor Davies, "Remembering Charles Rennie Mackintosh: a recorded interview with Mrs. Mary Sturrock," *Connoisseur*, Vol. 183, no. 738, August 1973, p. 282.

[30]W. Shaw Sparrow, "Herr Toorop's 'The Three Brides'," the *Studio*, Vol. 1, August 1893, p. 248.

[31]*Ibid.*

[32]Mary Sturrock (daughter of Francis and Jerry Newbery), when questioned as to whether Mackintosh was interested in religion, replied that Charles and Margaret were not "churchy" people, but that Glasgow was "rather medical and rather churchy." Bedford and Davies, "Remembering Charles Rennie Mackintosh," p. 185, 188.

[33]Talwin Morris, a close friend of the "Four" and a major participant in the development of the Glasgow Style, wrote "An Appreciation" of the work of the four artists in which he considered, among others, *The Christmas Story* by Frances and Margaret. The tone of the article suggests that the Macdonald sisters modified their usually bold approach to suit these more solemn subjects. Frances' designs are "intellectual in grasp, convincing in realization. Naturally in a sombre key, the peculiarly individual conception is handled with earnest solemnity. . ." In general, however, Morris notes that all four artists place individual expression above public opinion, probably a carry–over from Newbery's philosophies:

> "Happily its originators (the Glasgow Four) are beyond the influence of the brutal and blighting Philistinism of the 'Public opinion' — we had almost said taste: — which just now is disposed to vary its base grumblings that everything old must needs be venerable, by shrieks at the other end of the scale, even more intolerable, that everything new must be good."

Talwin Morris, "Concerning the Work of Margaret Macdonald, Frances Macdonald, Charles Mackintosh and Herbert McNair; an Appreciation." (Unpublished Manuscript, 1879, p. 10.) Original in the collection of Glasgow Art Galleries & Museums, Glasgow, Scotland.

[34]Jessie R. Newbery, Foreword to *Charles Rennie Mackintosh/Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh Memorial Exhibition* (Glasgow: McLellan Galleries, 1988), p. 1. It should be noted that during the period discussed herein Schwabe's illustrations did not appear in the *Studio*. This work did, however, have some effect on Margaret's work c. 1900.

[35]In light of the previously discussed series of graphic designs for the Art Club by the Macdonald sisters, and the date in which *Descent* appeared, the Diploma design (signed but not dated), might well be assigned to late 1893 (just subsequently to publication of Toorop's *Three Brides*) or early 1894. Thomas Howarth's illustration of this work is dated c. 1893; however it is shown, in the Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts Exhibition Catalogue, as 1895. Andrew McLaren Young, in *Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928 Architecture, Design and Painting* (Edinburgh, 1968) associates it with Toorop; and because of this and its similarities with the "At Home" serives, dates it as late 1893 or possibly 1894.

[36]Some years later, when Mackintosh was writing one of many letters to Margaret, he referred to another drawing which was ". . .all green; one elimination that I am now always striving for. You understand my difficulty knowing as you do my insane aptitude for seeing green and putting it down here and there and everywhere the very first thing — this habit complicates every color scheme that I am aiming at so I must get over this vicious habit. That's one of my minor curses: green, green, green. . ." Letter from Mackintosh to Margaret Macdonald dated Friday, May 27, 1927, collection of Glasgow Museum & Art Galleries, Glasgow.

[37]It should be noted that the three previously discussed works by Mackintosh were the only designs which incorporated the female figure, nude or otherwise. The remaining eight paintings and drawings focused on botanically derived forms with nature as the obvious source of symbolism. *The Tree of Personal Effort*, *The Tree of Influence* (Spring, 1896) and *Cabbage in an Orchard* (April, 1894) represent the most extreme distortion of organic forms by Mackintosh. One source comments that the exact meaning of this symbolism has eluded all commentators, although it would seem likely that it relates to topical student causes and beliefs discussed at that time. (Roger Billclifee, *Mackintosh Watercolours*, London: Carter Nash Cameron Ltd., 1978), p. 29. The latter work, *Cabbages*, was accompanied by a caustic explanation which suggests that Mackintosh was encountering criticism from the public or fellow students on the grounds of incomprehensibility (*ibid.*, p. 29). Mackintosh concludes the lengthy remark by stating that ". . .this confusing and indefinite state of affairs is caused by the artist — who is no common landscape painter, but is one who paints so much above the comprehension of the ordinary ignorant public, that his pictures need an accompanying descriptive explanation such as the above." C.R. Mackintosh, the *Magazine*, April No. 1894, pp. 27–32.

[38]The *Studio* also advised its readers that the decoration of book plates should be "consistent, and with ordered balance of parts, to be successful. . ." and that "Perfect Symmetry and a choice of type in harmony with the style of the design itself are matters of the first importance." ("Designing for Book Plates, With Some Recent Examples," *Studio*, no. 1, April 1893, pp. 26–27.)

[39]One source notes that the Celts, who were best known for their beautiful manuscripts, metal work and stone carving, avoided foliage and plant forms in their designs. Their intricate, often geometric patterns were based on spiral or interlacing forms and the birds and animals (including snakes) they incorporated were extremely elongated and interlaced. Mary Jean Alexander, *Handbook of Decorative Design and Ornament* (New York: Tudor Publishing

Company, 1965), p. 105. In 1873 Christopher Dresser's *Principles of Decorative Design* provided examples of Celtic "grotesques" in ornament which he stated were analogous to humor in literature. Christopher Dresser, *Principles of Decorative Design* (London: Academy Editions, 1973), pp. 25–26. It should also be noted that the Century Guild's publication, *Hobby Horse*, which terminated in 1892, made extensive use of capital lettering intertwined with vegetation.

[40]*Art Journal*, 1895, p. 177.

[41]The other illustrations included *La Cigale*, *Les Revenants de Musique*, *Siegfried*, a frieze design, and four blocks from Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*.

[42]Joseph Pennell, "A New Illustrator: Aubrey Beardsley," the *Studio*, Vol. 1, no. 1, April 1893, p. 14.

[43]*Ibid.*, p. 18.

[44]Margaret's later painting, *Moonlit Garden* (c. 1897) which some sources attribute to Frances, along with collaborative works for a "Drooko" Poster (c. 1896–97) and Glasgow Institute poster (c. 1896) are the only works which show the direct influence of Beardsley, though much of Margaret's decorative gesso work from the early 1900's features the linearized voluminous shapes of robes characteristic in Beardsley's drawings. In *Moonlight Garden* Margaret specifically adopted the symbolic lily, but combined it with the stylized ravens which can be found in their works from 1893–94. In the collaborative posters, a similar stylized lily is also present but the rose, which became the trademark of the Glasgow Style, is more predominant. In light of the similarity to Margaret's figures in the *Defence of Guinevere* series of 1897, *Moonlit Garden* was probably authored by Margaret and dates from 1897, when Margaret and Frances were engaged in collaborative work.

[45]For discussion of Beardley's representations of women see B.J. Elliott, Covent Garden Follies: Beardsley's Masquerade Images of Posers and Voyeurs," *Oxford Art Journal*, 9:1 (1986), 38–48, and B.J. Elliott, "Aubrey Beardsley's Images of 'New Women' in *The Yellow Book* (Ph.D. dissertation, University College, London, 1985).

[46]Francis and Jessie Newbery's daughter, Mary Sturrock, states that according to Jessie King (a classmate of the Macdonald sisters), it was the Botticelli pen and ink drawings that influenced Margaret, and not Beardsley. Bedford and Davies, p. 288.

[47]King's individual black and white style attracted the *Studio* which, by frequently publishing her work, was instrumental in establishing her reputation. King was a major contributor to the Glasgow Style, and enjoyed one of the longest and most successful careers of her contemporaries.

[48]*Studio* added that "the burlesque is in no way evidence of a lack of appreciation of the many charming drawings by the art editor of the *Yellow Book*. *Studio*, Vol. 3, no. 14, May 1894.

[49]"New Publications: *Le Morte d'Arthur*," the *Studio*, Vol. 2, no. 11, February 1894, pp. 183–184.

[50]*Ibid.*

[51]*Ibid.*

[52]Quoted in H. Montgomery Hyde, *Artists of The Yellow Book & The circle of Oscar Wilde.* (London: Clarendon Gallery Ltd. and Michael Parkin Fine Art Ltd., 1983), p. 14.

[53]Philip Gilbert Hamerton, "The Yellow Book: A Criticism of Volume I," the *Yellow Book*, Vol. II, July 1894, p. 179–180.

[54]*Ibid.*, p. 190. The principal authors during the first two years included Max Beerbohm, Henry James, Ella D'Arcy, Kenneth Grahame and Richard LeGallienne. The most predominant (or eminent) illustrators were Beardsley, Joseph Pennell, Walter Sickert, Anning Bell and John Sargent.

[55]For example, the cover design for Vol. VIII (January, 1896) was by D.Y. Cameron (brother of Kate Cameron, a contemporary of the Macdonald sisters); the remaining artists were those associated with the Glasgow School ("The Glasgow Boys") which included A. Frew, D. Gauld, F. Newbery (Headmaster, GSA), George Pirie, E. Hornel, George Henry, E.A. Walton, James Guthrie and John Lavery.

[56]It is also interesting to note the parallels between one of the essays in the *Yellow Book*, "Women — Wives or Mothers, By a Woman" and Patrick Geddes' article on "The Moral Evolution of Sex" published in *Evergreen* two years later, where both discuss the distinction between the housemother and new woman and woman's predestinated role of wife or mother in very similar terms. (The *Yellow Book*, Vol. III, October, 1894, pp. 11–18; and *Evergreen*, Summer, 1896, pp. 73–85. Another male writer contributed "The Girl of the Future" (an article dealing with the same issues), in the *Universal Review*, Vol. VII, no. 25, May–August, 1890, pp. 49–64.

[57]One writer in *Magazine of Art* points out that "to be a devout Decadent, too, you must not only be wicked; you must be worse — as *Punch* would say — you must be vulgar. Mr. Beardsley has a trick of superimposing one style on another — Japanese on mediaeval, mediaeval on Celtic. That does not matter so long as he has the genius to unify; but what does matter is that the groundwork of them all should be Cockney. . ." (Margaret Armour, "Aubrey Beardsley and the Decadents," *Magazine of Art*, 1896–67, p. 10.)

[58]To this one might add the literary symbolism of the Belgian Symbolist writer, Maurice Maeterlinck. Research indicates that Margaret (who was fluent in German) was known to have Maeterlinck novels in her home c. 1897 and archival papers and letters of friends remark on the parallels between Margaret's symbolism and the mystical ambience of Maeterlinck's writing. A case might be made for a connection between *A Pond* by Frances and Maeterlinck's 1889 *Serres Chaudes*; particularly the languid, moist, and oppressed atmosphere viewed through the green windows of the hothouse; and

one passage which reads:

> *"Perhaps there is a tramp on a throne*
> *You have the idea that corsars are waiting on a pond,*
> *And that antediluvian beings are going to invade towns."*

(Jethro Bithell, *Life and Writings of Maurice Maeterlinck.* (London: Walter Scott Publishing Co. Ltd., 1913), p. 26. Maeterlinck's play *The Intruder* which appeared in *La Wallonie* in January of 1890 also refers to a pond in which swans are afraid, fish dive, and roses shed their leaves; and in 1891 his *Seven Princesses* playlet, from which Margaret adapted her 1906 gesso panels by the same name, speaks of green ponds black with shadows over willow-hung canals (*ibid*, pp. 55–58). While Margaret's friends noted the presence of Maeterlinck's works in her home, most of these observations date from the very late 1890's or early 1900's by which time influence was clearly illustrated by adoption of his titles as well as the imagery.

[59]*Glasgow Evening News*, 29 January 1895.

[60]Press cuttings, May 1895. The writer claimed that the "striking figure of a girl in flowing yellow skirt and great black hat, and with the neatest little red shoe suggesting the natural pose of the figure" was by far the most artistic and effective poster; Dudley Hardey's *Gaiety Girl* was another "capital example" of a good poster.

[61]The extent to which Beardsley and the *Yellow Book* had become synonymous for decadence is illustrated by an article which appeared in an 1896 issue of *Magazine of Art.* "Mr. Beardsley's technique is masterly," a writed noted; but "it is from the spirit of his work that the great black, damning shadow falls that, to many eyes, is total exlipse. A certain grossness, which revolts one even in his treatment of inanimate things, gets free rein in his men and women, notably in those of The Yellow Book period. . ." (Armour, p. 10).

[62]David and Francina Irwin, *Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad 1700–1900* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), pp. 36–38.

[63]Six months prior to the controversial GSA Club Exhibition, a Glasgow print-seller attempted to display engravings by prominent British artists, only to have them seized by the Chief Constable who declared them unfit for public inspection. Sir Frederick Leighton's *Bath of Psyche*, Hacker's *Syrinx*, Watts' *Diana and Endymion*, Poynter's *Visit to Aesculapius* and Solomon's *Orpheus and Judgment of Paris* were withdrawn under the guide of a local act. The *Magazine of Art* demanded retribution:–

> The insolence of the insult to the distinguished painters in question exceeds only the impudence of the affront to the public of Glasgow who, whatever they may be, are not, or do not claim to be, more easily shocked than the inhabitants of the other cities of the Empire. We are used to this sort of thing from the Pharisees of some Western State of America; but from a city which boasts a school of art that is

to be reckoned with in present status of the arts in Great Britain, we expected no such humiliation, no such scandal."

Sir Leighton added that in Glasgow, the dignity and beauty of the noblest work of creation — the human form — awakened only suggestions of the obscene; . . ."only time and the increasing influence of the more enlightened citizens of Glasgow can be looked to in order to bring about a more wholesome and cleaner state of mind." ("Art in May: Parochialism and the Nude," *Magazine of Art*, May 1894, p. xxxi.)

[64]This mixture of Hague and Barbizon works recurs in several exhibitions from the late 1870's to 1890's, and is a striking taste because it is so uniform throughout Scotland — especially in Glasgow — and because it contrasts so strongly with the taste of provincial England for English art, in particular for the Pre–Raphaelites. (Elizabeth Bird, "International Glasgow," *Connoisseur*, Vol. 183, no. 738, August 1973, p. 250.) For a thorough discussion on the history of Glasgow's major exhibitions, see Perilla and Juliet Kinchin, Glasgow's Great Exhibitions: 1888–1902–1938–1988. (Oxon: White Cockade Publishing, 1988)

[65]The most vital period for this group, which included W.Y. MacGregor, James Guthrie, E.A. Walton, R. Macaulay Stevenson, George Henry and E.A. Hornel, lasted from approximately 1885–1896. Their secessionist activities, inspired by Whistler, called for rejection of the romantic and sentimental literary style of their academic colleagues; instead they attempted to create works of intrinsic beauty based on their experiences of ordinary events, human activities and familiar landscape which did not require a religious or literary message. Henry and Hornel were best known for their Japanese–Impressionist style which resulted from their trip to Japan in 1893–94. Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: 1868–1928* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1978), p. 9. See also Chapter 6, "Glasgow School," in William Hardie *Scottish Painting 1837–1939* (London: Studio Vista, 1976), pp. 72–83.

[66]Francis H. Newbery, Introduction to David Martin's *The Glasgow School of Painting* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1897), p. xxiii. Newbery also claimed that Glasgow was devoid of the controlling power of London's Royal Academy and the strong opinion of its cultured lay community; therefore its artists had always been free to pursue any subject matter and style.

[67]Isobel Johnstone, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, no. 14, Winter/Spring, 1977.

[68]For example, C.P. Anstruther contributed an extensive two–part essay which explored some of the more accessible avenues open to women artists, in "Women's Work in Art Industries" (Vol. 1, June 1888 – May 1889, pp. 131–132 and 158–159).

[69]Significantly, some of the key contributors later assumed major roles in the newer periodicals; notably Gleeson White with the *Studio* and Patrick Geddes with the *Evergreen*.

[70]Gleeson White, "Students' Work at South Kensington, August 1889," *Scottish Art Review*, Vol. II, no. 15, August 1889, p. 132.

[71]*Ibid.*, p. 131.

[72]*Ibid.* Francis Newbery responded to the article, arguing that no antique drawing in the exhibition displayed half the "laborious detail" and "niggling petty work" demanded of a student working in the Royal Academy schools. ("Students' Work at South Kensington — A Reply," *Scottish Art Review*, Vol. II, no. 19, December 1889, p. 168.

[73]Gleeson White, "The Arts and Crafts Exhibition, 1896 (Third Notice)," *Studio*, Vol. IX, no. 45, December 1896, p. 202. White admitted that "the spooky school" was a nickname not wholly unmerited. Charles Mackintosh is also mentioned briefly as being under the same influence which White inferred might be "the bogiest of bogie books by Hokusai."

[74]From 1895 *The Artist* adopted a new large format and a mass of illustrations, as well as a new form of title, *The Artist, Photographer & Decorator, An Illustrated Monthly Journal of Applied Art*, changing again in 1896 to *The Artist, An Illustrated Monthly Record of Arts, Crafts & Industries*. The latter two name changes were probably a reflection on the full name of the *Studio*, the format of which it attempted to adopt as a response to the success of the *Studio*. (Simon Jervis, *The Penguin Dictionary of Design and Designers*, (Aylesbury, Penguin Books Ltd., 1984), p. 32.)

[75]Gleeson White, "The Arts and Crafts Exhibition (Third Notice)," p. 204.

[76]Gleeson White, "Some Glasgow Designers and Their Work" (Part I), the *Studio*, Vol. XI, no. 52, July 1897, pp. 88–89.

[77]E. Lynn Linton, "The Wild Woman as Politicians," *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. XXX, no. 173, March 1890, p. 79.

[78]E. Lynn Linton, "The Wild Woman as Social Insurgents," *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. XXX, no. 176, October 1891, pp. 600–601. See also Mona Caird, "Defence of So–Called Wild Women," *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 31, May 1893, pp. 811–829.

[79]*Ibid.*, p. 604.

[80]In the poem about the New Woman the writer refers to her as "ground–spavined at the knees," which is perhaps a reference to the feminists who made the news elsewhere by playing football in 'orthodox knickers and shin–pads'. Bird notes such a reference in *Glasgow Evening News*, November 14, 1894. (Bird, "Ghouls & Gaspipes," p. 14.)

[81]Since many of the names of illustrators and writers were prefaced by initials only, it is impossible to determine the proportion of female and male contributors. However it is safe to conclude that the *Studio* included considerably more female artists and features devoted solely to single female artists than other publications, notably *Magazine of Art* and *Art Journal*. As

an example, a regular section entitled "From Gallery, Studio and Mart" featured a series of "At Home" invitations designed by an association of women from the '91 Art Club which discussed the work without the usual suffix ". . .for a woman." Figure 13, which portrays a very straightforward version of a ghost shows the vast difference in focus and style between more typical students' work and the "ghoul–like" designs of the Macdonald sisters. *Studio*, Vol. III, no. 15, June 1894.

[82]Bryan Holme, grandson of the *Studio's* founder Charles Holme, states that the "How to do it" series were begun in the 1930's as an attempt to salvage declining interest in the publication due to the war and depression. "We told ourselves that the only excuse *Studio* could have for being so "commercial" as to publish technical books was to make our "How to's" more glamourous than those on any other publisher's list." (Bryan Holme, *The Studio: A Bibliography of the first Fifty Years (1893–1943)* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), p. 4.

[83]*Ibid.*, pp. 6–7. The *Studio's* circulation included Russia, Germany, Spain, Austria and Japan. Holme also states that the newly perfected halftone reproduction process contributed to its quality: paintings and photographs could now be printed in continuous tone through a photo–engraving, instead of a line engraving which had required copy–artists to render a picture in line for printing (*ibid.*, p. 1).

[84]In the period 1899–1916 there were at least twenty articles on artists who had graduated from the GSA, the majority of whom were female. In 1900 Francis Newbery also contributed an article on the GSA.

[85]Although Gleeson White's articles were precipitated by the Macdonald sisters' decorative work completed subsequent to their attendance at the GSA, the distorted female imagery was still central to the design and sufficiently radical to provoke censure.

[86]Gleeson White, "Some Glasgow Designers and Their Work" (Part I), the *Studio*, Vol. XI, no. 52, July 1897, p. 89.

[87]*Ibid.* Hermann Muthesius, a personal friend of Margaret and Charles Mackintosh, reiterated this when he commented on their work in 1902:

> "The human figure appears to be regarded as material merely for indulging a taste for soft flowing lines. At need it is impossibly lengthened out or otherwise altered, and yet at the same time it is always made decorative. It has been conventionalised in the same way as the English pattern designers have conventionalised flowers. It is cramped into all sorts of strange positions in order to help out a required note in the decoration. Here we have the very last word on the 'decorative line', the primary origin of which is to be sought for in England."

Hermann Muthesius, foreword to the Portfolio of Drawings (1902) for the House for an Art Lover, reprinted in *Charles Rennie Mackintosh* (London: Architectural Association, 1981), p. 7.

[88]In another article the *Studio* also stated that "the GSA shows the accomplished direction of its Headmaster has resulted in a very large increase of passes and awards in the National Competition, when 33 prizes fell to its students. These included 6 medals for design, 2 for life studies, 2 for architecture, and 2 for modelling. In addition to these there is a list of honours too long to quote." (Vol. 2, no. 7, October 1893, p. 37)

[89]*Ibid.*

[90]The Macdonald sisters, Mackintosh, MacNair, and the Raeburn sisters (Lucy and Agnes) were members of a group of friends whose youthful spirit was reflected in the name they selected for themselves.

[91]Quoted in King, *The Scottish Women's Suffrage Movement*, p. 14.

[92]*Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

[93]The Catalogue to *Glasgow Girls: Women in the Art School 1880–1920* (Glasgow School of Art, July 14–August 31, 1988) refers to an entry (No. 50) by Daisy McGlashan, c. 1898 for a "Glasgow Style" Aesthetic Dress as described above. Francis Newbery's Press Cuttings Book contains numerous excerpts from newspapers which refer to the dramatic dress and style of his wife and the female GSA students. For example, the "living pictures" of fair maidens attired in quaint and queer and nondescript garments"; the "aesthetic attire of the damsels" (*Glasgow Evening News*, May 22, 1895). Jessie Newbery's daughter also mentions the exceptional and unconventional quality of clothes made and worn by her mother, Ann MacBeth, and Margaret Macdonald: "Anybody can be different nowadays but you can't imagine how distinctive this was in those days and how outrageous to ordinary Glasgow citizens." (Bedford and Davies, "Remembering Charles Rennie Mackintosh," *Connoisseur*, Vol. 183, no. 738, August 1973, p. 286)

[94]"A Week with the Jim–Jammers (By Our Own Weird One)," *Saint*, December 2, 1895 (Press Cuttings Book), p. 61.

[95]Quoted in Hardie, p. 201.

## CONCLUSION

[1]Griselda Pollock, "Women, Art and Ideology: Questions for Feminist Art Historians – II: Academies of Art: Naked Power," *Women's Art Journal*, Vol. 4, no. 1, Spring/Summer 1983, p. 45.

[2]Denvir, "Role of the *Studio*," p. 236.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 238. Denvir states that this accounted for the decline and eventual disappearance of magazines such as *Art Journal*, *Artist* and *Portfolio*

[4]"Art in November," *Magazine of Art*, November 1888, p. v.

[5]Quoted in Bird, "Ghouls & Gaspipes," p. 15, as *Glasgow Evening News*, November 16, 1894.

[6]Linda Dowling, "The Decadent and the New Woman in the 1890's," *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, Vol. 33, March 1979, p. 436. Dowling's article provides a thorough discussion of the impact of these stigmas and the manner in which other kinds of dailys and periodicals perpetuated them.

[7]It is interesting to note that this promotion of foreign artists continued after the first World War, notwithstanding that British artists had by then become insular and derivative, contributing little to the great upsurge of avant-garde art in Europe and America. Against this background, one source stated, the *Studio* had difficulty in acting as a unifying force in the arts but it still continued to reflect the excitement of new movements, supporting and encouraging the work of younger British artists. Bryan Holme, *The Studio: A Bibliography of the First Fifty Years (1893–1943)* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), p. 7.

[8]Quoted in Juliet Kinchen, "Glasgow-Budapest, 1902," *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Newsletter*, no. 41, Autumn 1984.

[9]J. Meier-Graefe, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der modernen Kunst*, I–III, Stuttgart, Vol. II, 1904–05, p. 260, quoted in Jude Burkhauser, "Doers of the Word. . .Towards the 'New Eve', *Glasgow Girls: Women in the Art School 1880–1920*, p. 20.

[10]*Glasgow Evening News*, November 17, 1894, p. 3.

[11]Hermann Muthesius, 1902.

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## APPENDIX I

**Summary of Awards Won by Margaret and Frances Macdonald in National Competitions and Advanced Local Examinations for South Kensington District, 1890–94**

| Year | Examination | Award | No. of Awards Given | No. Rec'd. by Female Students | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Margaret Macdonald** | | | | | |
| 1892 | Advanced Local Examinations | | | | |
| | Anatomy | 1st Class | 2 | 2 | |
| | Design Ornament | 2nd Class | 3 | 2 | (one of which was Frances) |
| | Freelance Drawing | 2nd Class | 49 | 26 | |
| | Model Drawing | 2nd Class | 49 | 20 | |
| 1893 | Advanced Local Examinations | | | | |
| | Drawing From the Life | 2nd Class | 18 | 6 | |
| | Composition From a Given Figure Subject | 2nd Class | 10 | 5 | |
| 1894 | Advanced Local Examinations | | | | |
| | Stained Glass Design for Window | Honorable Mention | | | |
| 1895 | Design: Stained Glass Window Design | 1st Prize | 1 | 1 | |

| Year | Examination | Award | No. of Awards Given | No. Rec'd. by Female Students | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Frances Macdonald** | | | | | |
| 1892 | Advanced Local Examinations | | | | |
| | Design Ornament | 2nd class | 3 | 2 | (one of which was Margaret) |
| | Plant Drawing | 2nd class | 15 | 11 | |
| | Freehand Drawing | 2nd class | 49 | 26 | |
| 1893 | National Competition | | | | |
| | Design for a Majolica Plate | Bronze Medal | 11 | 10 | |
| | Pottery Design | Bronze Medal | 1 | | Medal given with the comment that "The award would have been higher but for the poor execution and very disagreeable color, which mar an otherwise good design." Examiners: Lewis F. Day, William Morris, F. Shields |
| | Advanced Local Examinations | | | | |
| | Composition From a Given Figure Subject | 2nd class | 10 | 5 | |
| | Majolica Design | General Award | 12 | 3 | |
| 1894 | Advanced Local Examination | | | | |
| | Drawing From the Antique | 2nd class | 27 | 6 | |
| | Painting in Monochrome | 1st class | 4 | 3 | |
| | Design: Honours Stage | 1st class | 2 | | Other recipient Charles Rennie Mackintosh; 2nd class rec'd. by Herbert MacNair. |
| | Principles of Ornament (Advanced Stage) | 2nd class | 5 | 2 | |
| | Model Drawing (Advanced Stage) | 1st class | 35 | 18 | |

| Year | Examination | Award | No. of Awards Given | No. Rec'd. by Female Students | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Drawing in Light and Shade (Advanced Stage) | 1st class | 39 | 21 | |
| | Design: Tapestry Hanging | 1st prize | 1 | 1 | (Comment by Examiners: "bold and clear in its conception.) |

Note: According to the GSA Records, all students were expected to submit work for Advanced Local Examinations and National Competitions. The following are enrollment figures for male and female students:

| Year | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|
| 1890–91 | 199 | 350 |
| 1891–92 | 192 | 326 |
| 1892–93 | 180 | 327 |
| 1893–94 | 206 | 332 |
| 1894–95 | 204 | 358 |

## APPENDIX II: ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1 Margaret Macdonald, *Summer* (c. 1893)
(Pen, ink, pencil and watercolor, 51.7 × 21.8 cm)
From *The Magazine*, April, 1894, p. 25

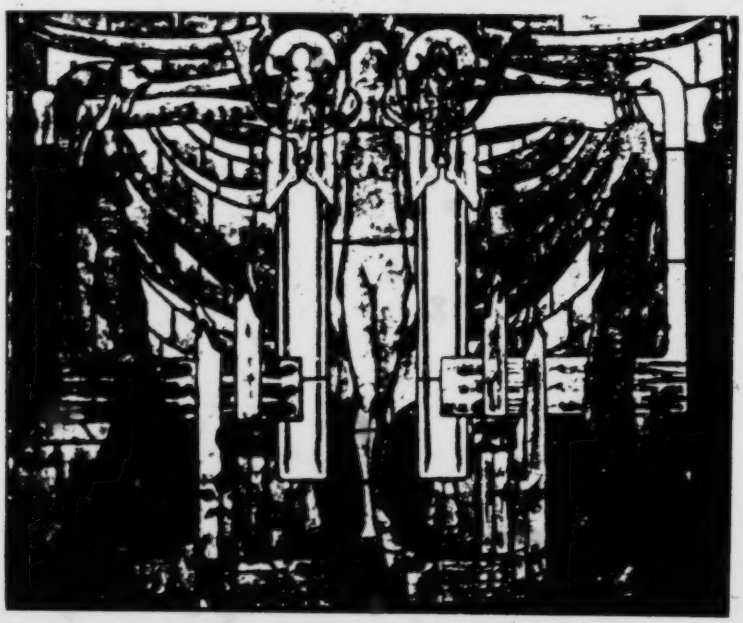

Fig. 2 Margaret Macdonald, *The Path of Life* (1894)
(Watercolor; original destroyed or lost)
From the *Magazine*, April 1894, p. 23

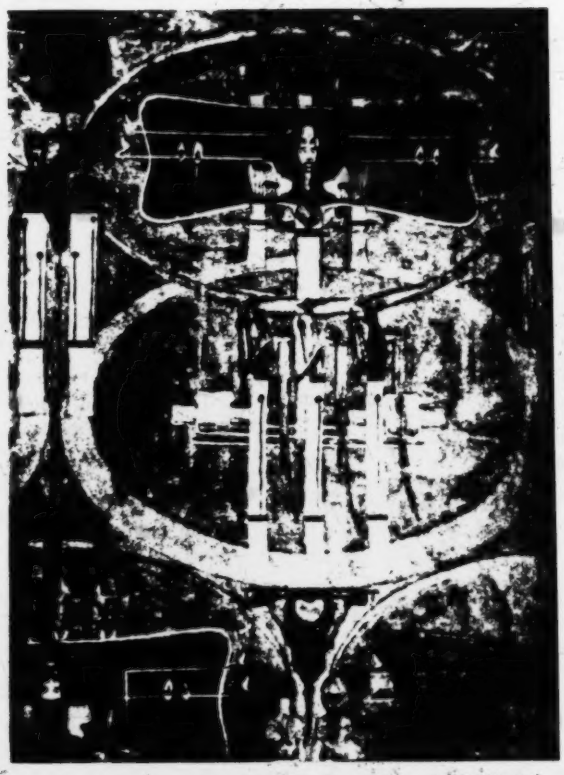

Fig. 3 Frances Macdonald, *Crucifixion* (c. 1893–94)
(Design for mural decoration; original lost)
From the *Magazine*, April 1894

Fig. 4 Detail of *Crucifixion*

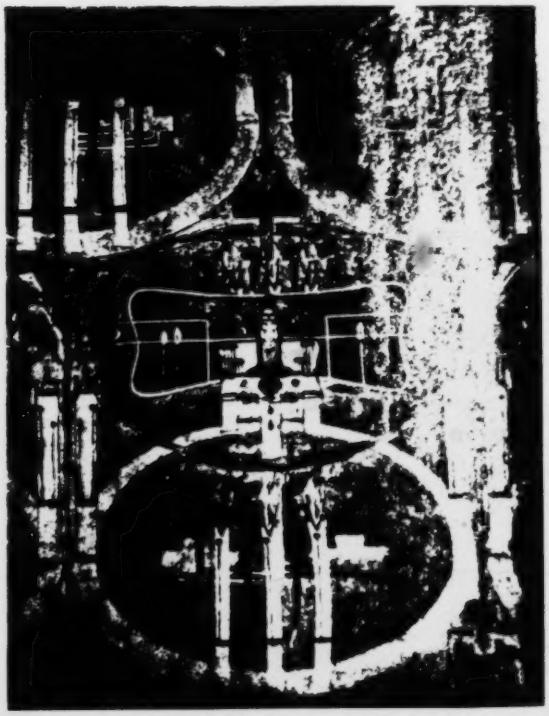

Fig. 5 Frances Macdonald, *Ascension* (c. 1893–94)
(Design for mural decoration; original lost)
From the *Magazine*, April 1894

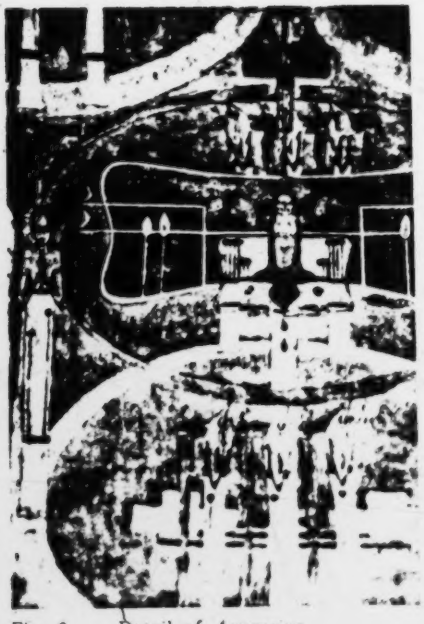

Fig. 6 Detail of *Ascension*

Fig. 7 Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris, *Love Leading the Pilgrim* (c. 1868)
(Collaborative design for stained glass and tapestry)

Fig. 8 Margaret Macdonald, *The 5th of November* (1894)
(Pencil, watercolor on grey paper. 31.5 × 19.0 cm)
From the *Magazine*, November 1894

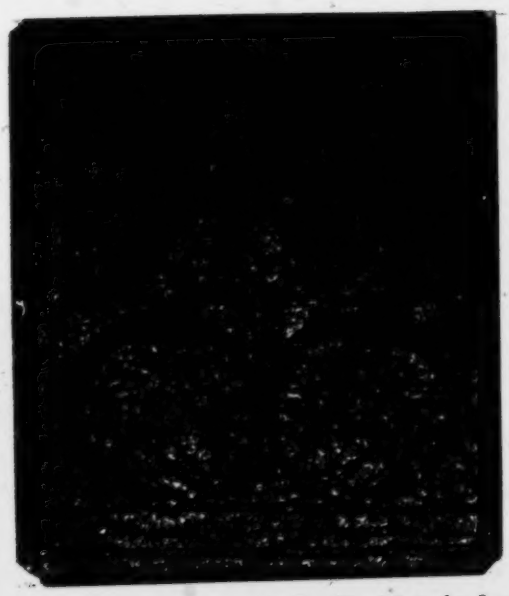

Fig. 9 Frances Macdonald, *Eve* (Ex Libris for Lucy Raeburn)
(November 1893)
(Bookplate–Stencil, 13.5 × 12 cm)
Frontspiece from the *Magazine*, November 1893

Fig. 10 Frances Macdonald, *Music Program for the Glasgow School of art "At Home," November 25, 1893* (1893)
(Lithograph or line block, 13.1 × 11.8 cm)

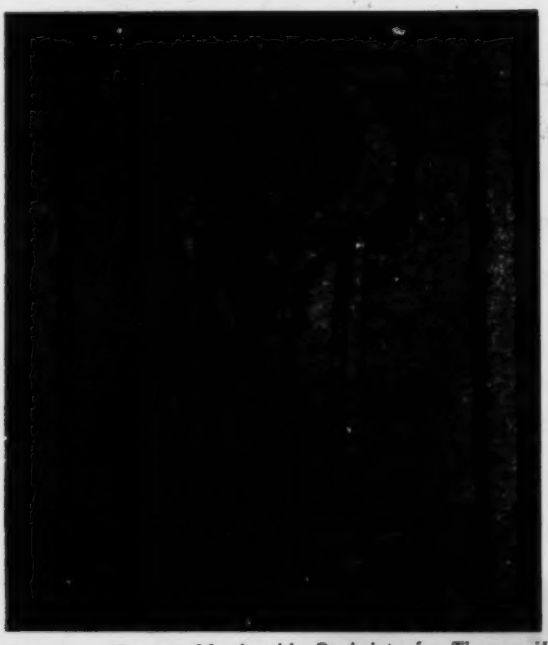

Fig. 11 Frances Macdonald, *Bookplate for Thomas Wilson*
(c. 1893)
(Lithograph, 3.9 × 7.8 cm)

Fig. 12 Margaret Macdonald, *Invitation Card for an "At Home" for the Glasgow School of Art Club, 25th November* (c. 1893)
(Lithograph or line block, 13.1 × 15.6 cm)

Fig. 13 Alice Woodward, *Design for the '91 Art Club "At Home"*
From the *Studio* III, no. 15, June 1894

Fig. 14
Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Harvest Moon* (1892)
(Pencil, watercolor, 35.2 × 27.6 cm)

Fig. 15 Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Invitation to the Glasgow School of Art Club "At Home," 19th November, 1892* (Blue ink, 13.4 × 21.7 cm)

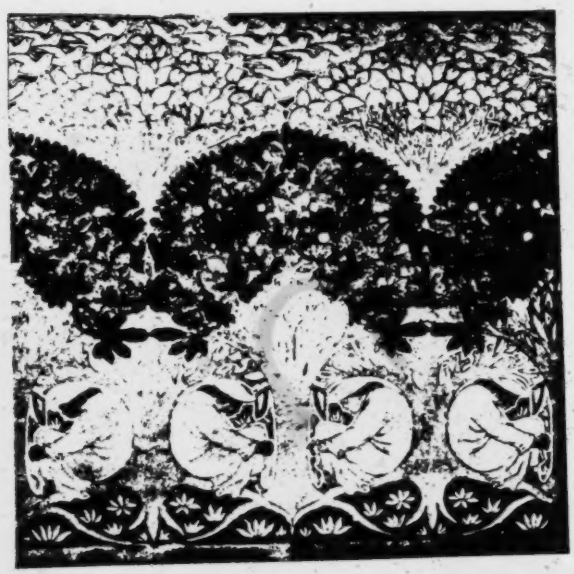

Fig. 16 C.F.M. Voysey, *Design for Wallpaper* (c.1893) From the *Studio* I, no. 6 (September 1893): 231

Fig. 17 Jan Toorop, *The Three Brides* (1893)
(Charcoal and colored pencil, 78 × 98 cm)
From the *Studio* I, no. 5 (August 1893): 247

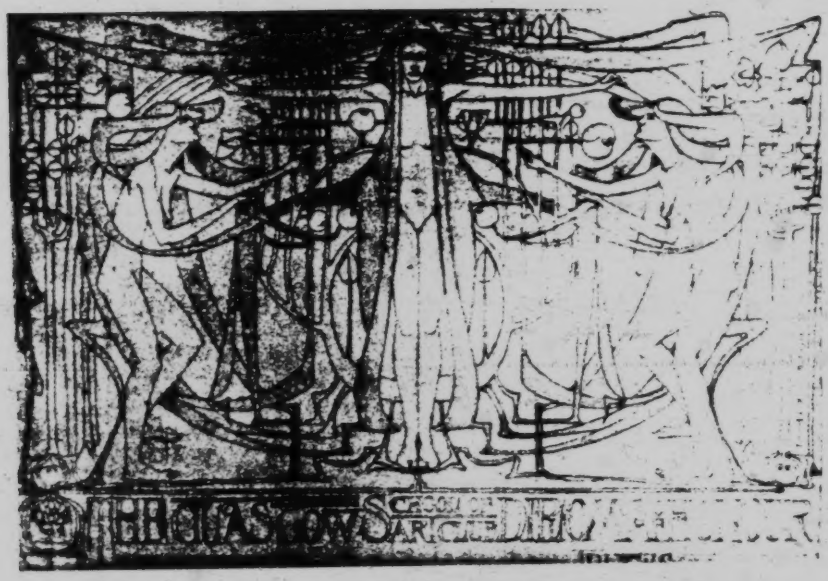

Fig. 18 Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Design for Diploma awarded by Glasgow School of Art Club* (c. 1893–94)
(Linocut, 23.2 × 29 cm)

Fig. 19
Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Descent of Night* (c. 1893–94)
(Pencil and watercolor, 24.0 × 17.0 cm)
From the *Magazine*, Spring 1894

Fig. 20 Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Spring* (1894)
(Watercolor and pencil)
From the *Magazine*

Fig. 21 Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Winter* (1895)
(Pencil, watercolor, 31.8 × 24.0 cm)
From the *Magazine*, Spring 1896

Fig. 22 Agnes Raeburn, Ex Libris for the *Magazine* (1894)
(Pencil and watercolor)
Frontspiece for the *Magazine*, April 1894

Fig. 23 Agnes Raeburn, *The Winged Woman* (1894)
(Pen and ink drawing)
Frontispiece for the *Magazine*, 1894–95

Fig. 24 Frances Macdonald, *A Pond* (1894)
(Pencil, pen, watercolor, 32 × 25.8 cm)
From the *Magazine*, November 1894

Fig. 25 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Astarte Syriaca* (1877)
(Oil on canvas)

Fig. 26 Anonymous, *No* (1894)
(Pen and ink drawing)
From the *Magazine* (April 1894): 39

Fig. 27 Aubrey Beardsley, *Salome* (1893)
(Pen and ink illustration)
From the *Studio* 1, no. 1 (April 1893): 19

Fig. 28 Henry Mitchel, *Black and White* (c. 1894–94)
(Pen drawing)
From the *Magazine*, Spring 1895

Fig. 29 Starr Wood, *Parody on Aubrey Beardsley* (1894)
From the *Studio*, III, no. 14 (May 1894)